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W. Lloyd Garrison

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THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

WITH A MEMOIR.

VOL. I.



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IF thou indeed derive thy light from Heaven,
Then, to the measure of that heaven-born light,
Shine, Poet! in thy place, and be content:—
The stars pre-eminent in magnitude,
And they that from the zenith dart their beams,
(Visible though they be to half the earth,
Though half a sphere be conscious of their brightness,)
Are yet of no diviner origin,
No purer essence, than the one that burns,
Like an untended watch-fire, on the ridge
Of some dark mountain; or than those which seem
Humbly to hang, like twinkling winter lamps,
Among the branches of the leafless trees;
All are the undying offspring of one Sire:
Then, to the measure of the light vouchsafed,
Shine, Poet! in thy place, and be content.



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SKETCH OF WORDSWORTH'S LIFE.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH was born at Cocker-mouth in Cumberland on the 7th of April, 1770, the second of five children. His father was John Wordsworth, an attorney-at-law, and agent of Sir James Lowther, afterwards first Earl of Lonsdale. His mother was Anne Cookson, the daughter of a mercer in Penrith. His paternal ancestors had been settled immemorially at Penistone in Yorkshire, whence his grandfather had emigrated to Westmoreland. His mother, a woman of piety and wisdom, died in March, 1778, being then in her thirty-second year. His father, who never entirely cast off the depression occasioned by her death, survived her but five years, dying in December, 1783, when William was not quite fourteen years old.

The poet's early childhood was passed partly at Cockermouth, and partly with his maternal grandfather at Penrith. His first teacher appears to have been Mrs. Anne Birkett, a kind of Shennstone's Schoolmistress, who practised the memory of her pupils, teaching them chiefly by rote, and

not endeavoring to cultivate their reasoning faculties, a process by which children are converted from natural logicians into impertinent sophists. Among his schoolmates here was Mary Hutchinson, who afterwards became his wife.

In 1778, he was sent to a school founded by Edwin Sandys, Archbishop of York, in the year 1585, at Hawkshead in Lancashire. Hawkshead is a small market-town in the vale of Esthwaite, about a third of a mile northwest of the lake. Here Wordsworth passed nine years, among a people of simple habits and scenery of a sweet and pastoral dignity. The boys were boarded among the dames of the village, thus enjoying a freedom from scholastic restraints, which could be nothing but beneficial in a place where the temptations were only to sports that hardened the body, while they fostered a love of nature in the spirit and habits of observation in the mind. Wordsworth's ordinary amusements here were hunting and fishing, rowing, skating, and long walks around the lake and among the hills. His life as a school-boy was favorable also to his poetic development, in being identified with that of the people among whom he lived. Among men of simple habits, and where there are small diversities of condition, the feelings and passions are displayed with less restraint, and the young poet grew acquainted with that primitive human basis of character where the Muse finds firm foothold, and to which

he ever afterward cleared his way through all the overlying drift of conventionalism.

At school he wrote some task-verses on subjects imposed by the master, and also some voluntaries of his own, equally undistinguished by any peculiar merit. But he seems to have made up his mind as early as in his fourteenth year to become a poet. In commenting, sixty years afterward, on a couplet in one of these poems, —

“And, fronting the bright west, the oak entwines
Its darkening boughs and leaves in stronger lines,” —

he says: “This is feebly and imperfectly expressed, but I recollect distinctly the very spot where this first struck me. The moment was important in my poetical history; for I date from it my consciousness of the infinite variety of natural appearances which had been unnoticed by the poets of any age or country, so far as I was acquainted with them, and I made a resolution to supply in some degree the deficiency.”

The great event of Wordsworth's school-days was the death of his father, who left what may be called a hypothetical estate, consisting chiefly of claims upon the first Earl of Lonsdale, the payment of which, though their justice was acknowledged, that nobleman contrived in some unexplained way to elude as long as he lived. In October, 1787, he left school for St. John's College, Cambridge. He was already, we are told, a fair

Latin scholar, and had made some progress in mathematics. The earliest books we hear of his reading were *Don Quixote*, *Gil Blas*, *Gulliver's Travels*, and the *Tale of a Tub*; but at school he had also become familiar with the works of some English poets, particularly Goldsmith and Gray, of whose poems he had learned many by heart. What is more to the purpose, he had become, without knowing it, a lover of Nature in all her moods, and the same mental necessities of a solitary life which compel men to an interest in the transitory phenomena of scenery, had made him also studious of the movements of his own mind, and the mutual interaction and dependence of the external and internal universe.

Doubtless his early orphanage was not without its effect in confirming a character naturally impatient of control, and his mind, left to itself, clothed itself with an indigenous growth, which grew fairly and freely, unstinted by the shadow of exotic plantations. It has become a truism, that remarkable persons have remarkable mothers; but perhaps this is chiefly true of such as have made themselves distinguished by their industry, and by the assiduous cultivation of faculties in themselves of only an average quality. It is rather to be noted how little is known of the parentage of men of the first magnitude, how often they seem in some sort foundlings, and how early an apparently adverse destiny begins the culture of those who

are to encounter and master great intellectual or spiritual experiences.

Of his disposition as a child, little is known, but that little is characteristic. He himself tells us that he was "stiff, moody, and of violent temper." His mother said of him that he was the only one of her children about whom she felt any anxiety, — for she was sure that he would be remarkable for good or evil. Once, in resentment at some fancied injury, he resolved to kill himself, but his heart failed him. "On another occasion," he says, "while I was at my grandfather's house at Penrith, along with my eldest brother Richard, we were whipping tops together in the long drawing-room, on which the carpet was only laid down on particular occasions. The walls were hung round with family pictures, and I said to my brother, 'Dare you strike your whip through that old lady's petticoat?' He replied, 'No, I won't.' 'Then,' said I, 'here goes,' and I struck my lash through her hooped petticoat, for which, no doubt, though I have forgotten it, I was properly punished. But, possibly from some want of judgment in punishments inflicted, I had become perverse and obstinate in defying chastisement, and rather proud of it than otherwise." This last anecdote is as happily typical as a bit of Greek mythology which always prefigured the lives of heroes in the stories of their childhood. Just so do we find him afterward striking his defiant lash through the

hooped petticoat of the artificial style of poetry, and proudly unsubdued by the punishment of the Reviewers.

Of his college life the chief record is to be found in "The Prelude." He did not distinguish himself as a scholar, and if his life had any incidents, they were of that interior kind which rarely appear in biography, though they may be of governing influence upon the life. He speaks of reading Chaucer, Spenser, and Milton while at Cambridge,* but no reflection from them is visible in his earliest published poems. The greater part of his vacations was spent in his native Lake-country, where his only sister, Dorothy, was the companion of his rambles. She was a woman of large natural endowments, chiefly of the receptive kind, and had much to do with the formation and tendency of the poet's mind. It was she who called forth the shier sensibilities of his nature, and taught an originally harsh and austere imagination to surround itself with fancy and feeling, as the rock fringes itself with ferns. She was his first public, and belonged to that class of prophetically appreciative temperaments whose apparent office it is to cheer the early solitude of original minds with messages from the future. Through the greater part of his life she continued to be a kind of poetical conscience to him.

* Prelude, Book III. He studied Italian also at Cambridge; his teacher, whose name was Isola, had formerly taught the poet Gray.

Wordsworth's last college vacation was spent in a foot journey upon the Continent. In January, 1791, he took his degree of B. A., and left Cambridge. During the summer of this year he visited Wales, and, after declining to enter upon holy orders under the plea that he was not of age for ordination, went over to France in November, and remained during the winter at Orleans. Here he became intimate with the republican General Beaupuis, with whose hopes and aspirations he ardently sympathized. In the spring of 1792 he was at Blois, and returned thence to Orleans, which he finally quitted in October for Paris. He remained here as long as he could with safety, and at the close of the year went back to England, thus probably escaping the fate which soon after overtook his friends the Brissotins.

As hitherto the life of Wordsworth may be called a fortunate one, not less so in the training and expansion of his faculties was this period of his stay in France. Born and reared in a country where the homely and familiar nestles confidently amid the most savage and sublime forms of nature, he had experienced whatever impulses the creative faculty can receive from mountain and cloud and the voices of winds and waters, but he had only known man as an actor in fireside histories and tragedies, for which the hamlet supplied an ample stage. In France he first felt the authentic beat of a nation's heart; he was a specta-

tor at one of those dramas where the terrible foot-fall of the Eumenides is heard nearer and nearer in the pauses of the action ; and he saw man such as he can only be when he is vibrated by the orgasm of a national emotion. He sympathized with the hopes of France and of mankind deeply, as was fitting in a young man and a poet ; and if his faith in the gregarious advancement of men was afterward shaken, he only held the more firmly by his belief in the individual, and his reverence for the human as something quite apart from the popular and above it. Wordsworth has been unwisely blamed, as if he had been recreant to the liberal instincts of his youth. But it was inevitable that a genius so regulated and metrical as his, a mind which always compensated itself for its artistic radicalism by an involuntary leaning toward external respectability, should recoil from whatever was convulsionary and destructive in politics, and above all in religion. He reads the poems of Wordsworth without understanding, who does not find in them the noblest incentives to faith in man and the grandeur of his destiny, founded always upon that personal dignity and virtue, the capacity for whose attainment alone makes universal liberty possible and assures its permanence.

In December, 1792, Wordsworth had returned to England, and in the following year published "Descriptive Sketches," and "An Evening Walk."

He did this, as he says in one of his letters, to show that, although he had gained no honors at the University, he *could* do something. They met with no great success, and he afterward corrected them so much as to destroy all their interest as juvenile productions, without communicating to them any of the merits of maturity. During the same year (1793) he wrote, but did not publish, a political tract, in which he avowed himself opposed to monarchy and to the hereditary principle, and desirous of a republic, if it could be had without a revolution. He probably continued to be all his life in favor of that ideal republic "which never was on land or sea," but fortunately he gave up politics that he might devote himself to his own nobler calling, to which politics are subordinate, and for which he found freedom enough in England as it was. But meanwhile, Want, which makes no distinctions of Monarchist or Republican, was pressing upon him. The debt due to his father's estate had not been paid, and Wordsworth was one of those rare idealists who esteem it the first duty of a friend of humanity to live for, and not on, one's neighbor. He at first proposed establishing a periodical journal to be called "The Philanthropist," but luckily went no further with it, for the receipts from an organ of opinion which professed republicanism, and at the same time discountenanced the plans of all existing or defunct republicans,

would have been necessarily scanty. There being no appearance of any demand, present or prospective, for philanthropists, he tried to get employment as correspondent of a newspaper. * Here also it was impossible that he should succeed ; he was too great to be merged in the editorial We, and had too well defined a private opinion on all subjects to be able to express that average of public opinion which constitutes able editorials. But so it is that to the prophet in the wilderness the birds of ill omen are already on the wing with food from heaven ; and while Wordsworth's relatives were getting impatient at what they considered his waste of time, while one thought he had gifts enough to make a good parson, and another lamented the rare attorney that was lost in him,* the prescient muse guided the hand of Raisley Calvert while he wrote the poet's name in his will for a legacy of £900. By the death of Cal-

* Speaking to one of his neighbors in 1845, he said, " that, after he had finished his college course, he was in great doubt as to what his future employment should be. He did not feel himself good enough for the Church ; he felt that his mind was not properly disciplined for that holy office, and that the struggle between his conscience and his impulses would have made life a torture. He also shrank from the Law, although Southey often told him that he was well fitted for the higher parts of the profession. He had studied military history with great interest, and the strategy of war ; and he always fancied that he had talents for command ; and he at one time thought of a military life, but then he was without connections, and he

vert, in 1795, this timely help came to Wordsworth at the turning-point of his life, and made it honest for him to write poems that will never die, instead of theatrical critiques as ephemeral as play-bills, or leaders that led only to oblivion.

In the autumn of 1795, Wordsworth and his sister took up their abode at Racedown Lodge, near Crewkerne, in Dorsetshire. Here nearly two years were passed, chiefly in the study of poetry, and Wordsworth recovered from the fierce disappointment of his political dreams, and regained that equable tenor of mind which alone is consistent with a healthy productiveness. Here Coleridge, who had contrived to see something more in the "Descriptive Sketches" than the public had discovered there, first made his acquaintance. The sympathy and appreciation of an intellect like Coleridge's supplied him with that external motive to activity which is the chief use of popularity, and justified to him his opinion of his own powers.

felt, if he were ordered to the West Indies, his talents would not save him from the yellow-fever, and he gave that up." (Memoirs, II. 466.) It is curious to fancy Wordsworth a soldier. Certain points of likeness between him and Wellington have often struck us. They resemble each other in practical good sense, fidelity to duty, courage, and also in a kind of precise uprightness which made their personal character somewhat uninteresting. But what was decorum in Wellington was piety in Wordsworth, and the entire absence of imagination (the great point of dissimilarity) perhaps helped as much as anything to make Wellington a great commander.

It was now that the tragedy of "The Borderers" was for the most part written, and that plan of the "Lyrical Ballads" suggested which gave Wordsworth a clew to lead him out of the metaphysical labyrinth in which he was entangled. It was agreed between the two young friends, that Wordsworth was to be a philosophic poet, and, by a good fortune uncommon to such conspiracies, Nature had already consented to the arrangement. In July, 1797, the two Wordsworths removed to Allfoxden in Somersetshire, that they might be near Coleridge, who in the meanwhile had married and settled himself at Nether-Stowey. In November "The Borderers" was finished, and Wordsworth went up to London with his sister to offer it for the stage. The good Genius of the poet again interposing, the play was decisively rejected, and Wordsworth went back to Allfoxden, himself the hero of that first tragi-comedy so common to young authors.

He now applied himself to the preparation of the first volume of the "Lyrical Ballads" for the press, and it was published toward the close of 1798. The book, which contained also "The Ancient Mariner" of Coleridge, attracted little notice, and that in great part contemptuous. When Mr. Cottle, the publisher, shortly after sold his copyrights to Mr. Longman, that of "The Lyrical Ballads" was reckoned at *zero*, and it was at last given up to the authors. A few persons were not

wanting, however, who discovered the dawn-streaks of a new day in that light which the critical fire-brigade thought to extinguish with a few contemptuous spirts of cold water.

Lord Byron describes himself as waking one morning and finding himself famous, and it is quite an ordinary fact, that a blaze may be made with a little saltpetre that will be stared at by thousands who would have thought the sunrise tedious. Wordsworth might have said that he awoke and found himself infamous, for the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* undoubtedly raised him to the distinction of being the most unpopular poet in England. Parnassus has two peaks; the one where improvising poets cluster; the other where the singer of deep secrets sits alone,—a peak veiled sometimes from the whole morning of a generation by earth-born mists and smoke of kitchen-fires, only to glow the more consciously at sunset, and after nightfall to crown itself with imperishable stars. Wordsworth had that self-trust which in the man of genius is sublime, and in the man of talent insufferable. With all the reviewers in a chorus of laughter behind him, he went quietly over to Germany to write more *Lyrical Ballads*, and to begin a poem on the growth of his own mind, at a time when there were only two men in the world (himself and Coleridge) who were aware that he had one, or at least one anywise differing from those mechanically uniform ones

which are stuck drearily, side by side, in the great pin-paper of society.

In Germany Wordsworth dined in company with Klopstock, and after dinner they had a conversation, of which Wordsworth took notes. The respectable old poet, who was passing the evening of his days by the chimney-corner, Darby and Joan like, with his respectable Muse, seems to have been rather bewildered by the apparition of a living genius. The record is of value now chiefly for the insight it gives us into Wordsworth's mind. Among other things he said "that it was the province of a great poet to raise people up to his own level, not to descend to theirs," — memorable words, the more memorable that a literary life of sixty years was in keeping with them.

After spending the winter at Goslar, Wordsworth and his sister returned to England in the spring of 1799, and settled at Grasmere in Westmoreland. In 1800, the first edition of the "Lyrical Ballads" being exhausted, it was republished with the addition of another volume, Mr. Longman paying £100 for the copyright of two editions. The book passed to a second edition in 1802, and to a third in 1805.* Wordsworth sent

* Wordsworth found (as other original minds have since done) a hearing in America sooner than in England. James Humphreys, a Philadelphia bookseller, was encouraged by a

a copy of it, with a manly letter, to Mr. Fox, particularly recommending to his attention the poems "Michael" and "The Brothers," as displaying the strength and permanence among a simple and rural population of those domestic affections which were certain to decay gradually under the influence of manufactories and poor-houses. Mr. Fox wrote a civil acknowledgment, saying that his favorites among the poems were "Harry Gill," "We are Seven," "The Mad Mother," and "The Idiot," but that he was prepossessed against the use of blank-verse for simple subjects. Any political significance in the poems he was apparently unable to see. To this second edition Wordsworth prefixed an argumentative Preface, in which he nailed to the door of the cathedral of English song the critical theses which he was to maintain against all comers in his poetry and his life. It was a new thing for an author to undertake to show the goodness of his verses by the logic and learning of his prose; but Wordsworth carried to the reform of poetry all that fervor and faith which had lost their political object, and it is another proof of the sincerity and greatness of his mind, and of that heroic simplicity which is their con-

sufficient *list of subscribers* to reprint the first edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*. The second English edition, however, having been published before he had wholly completed his reprinting, was substantially followed in the first American, which was published in 1802.

comitant, that he could do so calmly what was sure to seem ludicrous to the greater number of his readers. Fifty years have since demonstrated that the true judgment of one man outweighs any counterpoise of false judgment, and that the faith of mankind is guided to a man only by his faith in himself. To this *Defensio* Wordsworth afterward added a supplement, and the two form a treatise of permanent value for philosophic statement and decorous English. Their only ill-effect has been, that they have encouraged many otherwise deserving young men to set a Sibylline value on their verses in proportion as they were unsaleable. The strength of an argument for self-reliance drawn from the example of a great man depends wholly on the greatness of him who uses it; such arguments being like armor, which may serve the strong against arrow-flights and lance-thrusts, but only suffocates the weak or sinks him the sooner in the waters of oblivion.

In 1800 the friendship of Wordsworth with Lamb began, and was thenceforward never interrupted. He continued to live at Grasmere, conscientiously diligent in the composition of poems, secure of finding the materials of glory within and around him; for his genius taught him that inspiration is no product of a foreign shore, and that no adventurer ever found it, though he wandered as long as Ulysses. Meanwhile the appreciation of the best minds and the gratitude of the purest

hearts gradually centred more and more towards him. In 1802 he made a short visit to France, in company with Miss Wordsworth, and soon after his return to England was married to Mary Hutchinson, on the 4th of October of the same year. Of the good fortune of this marriage no other proof is needed than the purity and serenity of his poems, and its record is to be sought nowhere else. Domestic happiness furnishes few materials for history; its incidents are as unmemorable as the shifting shadows of the vine and fig-leaves under which it sits, as noiseless as the smoke which rises from its hearthstone to lose itself in the kindred blue of heaven. • The man of equable temperament may enjoy quiet, but the clear-aired level of happiness can only be maintained by him who, gifted with energetic passions, can by the force of character compel them to serve him, — can transfuse his intellect with them, and find in them the motive power of his daily occupations.

On the 18th of June, 1803, his first child, John, was born, and on the 14th of August of the same year he set out with his sister on a foot journey into Scotland. Coleridge was their companion during a part of this excursion, of which Miss Wordsworth kept a full diary. In Scotland he made the acquaintance of Scott, who recited to him a part of the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," then in manuscript. The travellers returned to Grasmere on the 25th of September. It was during

this year that Wordsworth's intimacy with the excellent Sir George Beaumont began. Sir George was an amateur painter of considerable merit, and his friendship was undoubtedly of service to Wordsworth in making him familiar with the laws of a sister art, and thus contributing to enlarge the sympathies of his criticism, the tendency of which was toward too great exclusiveness. Sir George Beaumont, dying in 1827, did not forego his regard for the poet, but contrived to hold his affection in mortmain by the legacy of an annuity of £100, to defray the charges of a yearly journey.

In March, 1805, the poet's brother, John, lost his life by the shipwreck of the Abergavenny East-Indiaman, of which he was captain. He was a man of great purity and integrity, and sacrificed himself to his sense of duty by refusing to leave the ship till it was impossible to save him. Wordsworth was deeply attached to him, and felt such grief at his death as only solitary natures like his are capable of, though mitigated by a sense of the heroism which was the cause of it. The need of mental activity as affording an object to intense emotion may account for the great productivity of this and the following year. He now completed "The Prelude," wrote "The Wagoner," and increased the number of his smaller poems enough to fill two volumes, which were published in 1807.

This collection, which contained some of the

most beautiful of his shorter pieces, and among others the incomparable Odes to Duty and on Immortality, did not reach a second edition till 1815. The reviewers had another laugh, and rival poets pillaged while they scoffed, particularly Byron, among whose verses a bit of Wordsworth showed as incongruously as a sacred vestment on the back of some buccaneering plunderer of an abbey. There was a general combination to put him down, but on the other hand there was a powerful party in his favor, consisting of William Wordsworth. He not only continued in good heart himself, but, reversing the order usual on such occasions, kept up the spirits of his friends.*

Wordsworth passed the winter of 1806-7 in a house of Sir George Beaumont's, at Coleorton in Leicestershire, the cottage at Grasmere having become too small for his increased family. On his return to the Vale of Grasmere, he rented the house at Allan Bank, where he lived

* The Rev. Dr. Wordsworth has encumbered the memory of his uncle with two volumes of "Memoirs," which for confused dreariness are only matched by the Rev. Mark Noble's "History of the Protectorate House of Cromwell." It is a misfortune that his materials were not put into the hands of Professor Reed, whose notes to the American edition are among the most valuable parts of it, as they certainly are the clearest. The book contains, however, some valuable letters of Wordsworth; and those relating to this part of his life should be read by every student of his works, for the light they throw upon the principles which governed him in the composition of his poems.

three years. During this period he appears to have written very little poetry, for which his biographer assigns as a primary reason the smokiness of the Allan Bank chimneys. This will hardly account for the failure of the summer crop, especially as Wordsworth composed chiefly in the open air. It did not prevent him from writing a pamphlet upon the Convention of Cintra, which was published too late to attract much attention, though Lamb says that its effect upon him was like that which one of Milton's tracts might have had upon a contemporary. It was at Allan Bank that Coleridge dictated "The Friend," and Wordsworth contributed to it two essays, one in answer to a letter of Mathetes* (Professor Wilson), and the other on Epitaphs, republished in the Notes to "The Excursion." Here also he wrote his "Description of the Scenery of the Lakes." Perhaps a truer explanation of the comparative silence of Wordsworth's Muse during these years is to be found in the intense interest which he took in current events, whose variety, picturesqueness, and historical significance were enough to absorb all the energies of his imagination.

In the spring of 1811, Wordsworth removed to the Parsonage at Grasmere. Here he remained two years, and here he had his second intimate experience of sorrow in the loss of two of his children. Catharine and Thomas, one of whom died 4th

* The first essay in the third volume of the second edition.

June, and the other 1st December, 1812.* Early in 1813, he bought Rydal Mount, and having removed thither, changed his abode no more during the rest of his life. In March of this year he was appointed Distributor of Stamps for the county of Westmoreland, an office whose receipts rendered him independent, and whose business he was able to do by deputy, thus leaving him ample leisure for nobler duties. De Quincey speaks of this appointment as an instance of the remarkable good-luck which waited upon Wordsworth through his whole life. In our view it is only another illustration of that Scripture which describes the righteous as never forsaken. Good-luck is the willing handmaid of upright, energetic character, and conscientious observance of duty. Wordsworth owed his nomination to the friendly exertions of the Earl of Lonsdale, who desired to atone as far as might be for the injustice of the first Earl, and who respected the honesty of the man more than he appreciated the originality of the poet.† The Collectorship at Whitehaven (a

* Wordsworth's children were, —

John, born 18th June, 1803; still living, a clergyman;

Dorothy, born 16th August, 1804, died 9th July, 1847;

Thomas, born 16th June, 1806, died 1st December, 1812;

Catharine, born 6th September, 1808, died 4th June, 1812;

William, born 12th May, 1810, succeeded his father as stamp-distributor.

† Good-luck (in the sense of *Chance*) seems properly to be the occurrence of Opportunity to one who has neither deserved nor knows how to use it. In such hands it commonly

more lucrative office) was afterwards offered to Wordsworth, and declined. He had enough for independence, and wished nothing more. Still later, on the death of the Stamp-Distributor for Cumberland, a part of that district was annexed to Westmoreland, and Wordsworth's income was raised to something more than £1,000 a year.

In 1814, he made his second tour in Scotland, visiting Yarrow in company with the Ettrick Shepherd. During this year the "Excursion" was published, in an edition of five hundred copies, which supplied the demand for six years. Another edition of the same number of copies was published in 1827, and not exhausted till 1834. In 1815, "The White Doe of Rylstone" appeared, and in 1816, "A Letter to a Friend of Burns," in which Wordsworth gives his opinion upon the limits to be observed by the biographers of literary men. It contains many valuable suggestions, but allows hardly scope enough for personal details, to which he was constitutionally indifferent. Nearly the same date may be ascribed to a rhymed translation of the first three books of the *Æneid*, a specimen of which was printed in the Cambridge "Philological Museum." In 1819, "Peter

turns to Ill-luck. Moore's Bermudan appointment is an instance of it. Wordsworth had a sound common-sense and practical conscientiousness, which enabled him to fill his office as well as Dr. Franklin could have done. A fitter man could not have been found in Westmoreland.

Bell," written twenty years before, was published, and, perhaps in consequence of the ridicule of the reviewers, found a more rapid sale than any of his previous volumes. "The Wagoner," printed at the same time, was less successful. His next publication was the volume of Sonnets on the River Duddon, with some miscellaneous poems, 1820. A tour on the Continent in 1820 furnished the subjects for another collection, published in 1822. This was accompanied in the same year by the volume of "Ecclesiastical Sketches." His subsequent publications were "Yarrow Revisited," 1835, and the tragedy of "The Borderers," 1842.

During all these years his fame was increasing slowly but steadily, and his age gathered to itself the reverence and the troops of friends which his poems and the nobly simple life reflected in them deserved. Public honors followed private appreciation. In 1838, the University of Dublin conferred upon him the degree of D. C. L. In 1839, Oxford did the same, and the reception of the poet (now in his seventieth year) at the University was enthusiastic. In 1842, he resigned his office of Stamp-Distributor, and Sir Robert Peel had the honor of putting him upon the civil list for a pension of £ 300. In 1843, he was appointed Laureate, with the express understanding that it was a tribute of respect, involving no duties except such as might be self-imposed. His only

official production was an Ode for the installation of Prince Albert as Chancellor of the University of Cambridge. His life was prolonged yet seven years, almost, it might seem, that he might receive that honor which he had truly conquered for himself by the unflinching bravery of a literary life of half a century, unparalleled for the scorn with which its labors were received, and the victorious acknowledgments which at last crowned them. Surviving nearly all his contemporaries, he had, if ever any man had, a foretaste of immortality, enjoying in a sort his own posthumous renown, for the hardy slowness of its growth gave a safe pledge of its lastingness. He died on the 23d of April, 1850, the anniversary of the deaths of Shakespeare and Cervantes.

We have thus briefly sketched the life of Wordsworth, a life uneventful even for a man of letters ; a life like that of an oak, of quiet self-development, throwing out stronger roots toward the side whence the prevailing storm-blasts blow, and of tougher fibre in proportion to the rocky nature of the soil in which it grows. The life and growth of his mind, and the influences which shaped it, are to be looked for, even more than is the case with most poets, in his works, for he deliberately recorded them there.

Of his personal characteristics little is related. He was somewhat above the middle height, but, according to De Quincey, of indifferent figure, the

shoulders being narrow and drooping. His finest feature was the eye, which was gray and full of spiritual light. Leigh Hunt says: "I never beheld eyes that looked so inspired, so supernatural. They were like fires, half burning, half smouldering, with a sort of acrid fixtured regard. One might imagine Ezekiel or Isaiah to have had such eyes." The best likeness of him, in De Quincey's judgment, is the portrait of Milton prefixed to Richardson's notes on *Paradise Lost*. He was active in his habits, composing in the open air, and generally dictating his poems. His daily life was regular, simple, and frugal; his manners were dignified and kindly; and in his letters and recorded conversations it is remarkable how little that was personal entered into his judgment of contemporaries.

The true rank of Wordsworth among poets is perhaps not even yet to be fairly estimated, so hard is it to escape into the quiet hall of judgment uninflamed by the tumult of partisanship which besets the doors. Fortunately, our province here is not chiefly that of critic.

Coming to manhood, predetermined to be a great poet, at a time when the artificial school of poetry was enthroned with all the authority of long succession and undisputed legitimacy, it was almost inevitable that Wordsworth, who, both by nature and judgment was a rebel against the existing order, should become a partisan. Unfor-

tunately, he became not only the partisan of a system, but of William Wordsworth as its representative. Right in general principle, he thus necessarily became wrong in particulars. Justly convinced that greatness only achieves its ends by implicitly obeying its own instincts, he perhaps reduced the following his instincts too much to a system, mistook his own resentments for the promptings of his natural genius, and, compelling principle to the measure of his own temperament, or even of the controversial exigency of the moment, fell sometimes into the error of making naturalness itself artificial. If a poet resolve to be original, it will end commonly in his being merely peculiar.

Wordsworth himself departed more and more in practice, as he grew older, from the theories which he had laid down in his prefaces; but those theories undoubtedly had a great effect in retarding the growth of his fame. He had carefully constructed a pair of spectacles through which his earlier poems were to be studied, and the public insisted on looking through them at his mature works, and were consequently unable to see fairly what required a different focus. He forced his readers to come to his poems with a certain amount of conscious preparation, and thus gave them beforehand the impression of something like mechanical artifice, and deprived them of the contented repose of im-

plicit faith. To the child a watch seems to be a living creature; but Wordsworth would not let his readers be children, and did injustice to himself by giving them an uneasy doubt whether creations which really throbbed with the very heart's-blood of genius, and were alive with nature's life of life, were not contrivances of wheels and springs. A naturalness which we are told to expect has lost the crowning grace of nature. The men who walked in Cornelius Agrippa's visionary gardens had probably no more pleasurable emotion than that of a shallow wonder, or an equally shallow self-satisfaction in thinking they had hit upon the secret of the thaumaturgy; but to an oak that has grown as God willed we come without a theory and with no botanical predilections, enjoying it simply and thankfully; or the Imagination recreates for us its past summers and winters, the birds that have nested and sung in it, the sheep that have clustered in its shade, the winds that have visited it, the cloud-bergs that have drifted over it, and the snows that have ermined it in winter. The Imagination is a faculty that flouts at foreordination, and Wordsworth seemed to do all he could to cheat his readers of her company by laying out paths with a peremptory *Do not step off the gravel!* at the opening of each, and preparing pitfalls for every conceivable emotion, with guideboards to tell each when and where it must be caught.

But if these things stood in the way of immediate appreciation, he had another theory which interferes more seriously with the total and permanent effect of his poems. He was theoretically determined not only to be a philosophic poet, but to be a *great* philosophic poet, and to this end he must produce an epic. Leaving aside the question whether the epic is obsolete or not, it may be doubted whether the history of a single man's mind is universal enough in its interest to furnish all the requirements of the epic machinery, and it may be more than doubted whether a poet's philosophy be ordinary metaphysics, divisible into chapter and section. It is rather something which is more energetic in a word than in a whole treatise, and our hearts uncloseth themselves instinctively at its simple *Open sesame!* while they would stand firm against the reading of the whole body of philosophy. In point of fact, the one element of greatness which "The Excursion" possesses indisputably is heaviness. It is only the episodes that are universally read, and the effect of these is diluted by the connecting and accompanying lectures on metaphysics. Wordsworth had his epic mould to fill, and, like Benvenuto Cellini in casting his Perseus, was forced to throw in everything, debasing the metal, lest it should run short. Separated from the rest, the episodes are perfect poems in their kind, and without example in the language.

It cannot be denied that in Wordsworth the very highest powers of the poetic mind were associated with a certain tendency to the diffuse and commonplace. It is in the Understanding (always prosaic) that the great golden veins of his imagination are imbedded. He wrote too much to write always well ; for it is not a great Xerxes-army of words, but a compact Greek ten thousand, that march safely down to posterity. He set tasks to his divine faculty, which is much the same as trying to make Jove's eagle do the service of a clucking hen. Throughout "The Prelude" and "The Excursion" he seems striving to bind the wizard Imagination with the sand-ropes of dry disquisition, and to have forgotten the potent spell-word which would make the particles cohere. There is an arenaceous quality in the style which makes progress wearisome. Yet with what splendors as of mountain-sunsets are we rewarded ! what golden rounds of verse do we not see stretching heavenward with angels ascending and descending ! what haunting melodies hover around us deep and eternal like the undying barytone of the sea ! and if we are compelled to fare through sands and desert wildernesses, how often do we not hear airy shapes that syllable our names with a startling personal appeal to our highest consciousness and our noblest aspiration, such as we wait for in vain in any other poet !

Take from Wordsworth all which an honest

criticism cannot but allow, and what is left will show how truly great he was. He had no humor, no dramatic power, and his temperament was of that dry and juiceless quality, that in all his published correspondence you shall not find a letter, but only essays. If we consider carefully where he was most successful, we shall find that it was not so much in description of natural scenery, or delineation of character, as in vivid expression of the effect produced by external objects and events upon his own mind, and of the shape and hue (perhaps momentary) which they in turn took from his mood or temperament. His finest passages are always monologues. He had a fondness for particulars, and there are parts of his poems which remind us of local histories in the undue relative importance given to trivial matters. He was the historian of Wordsworthshire. This power of particularization (for it is as truly a power as generalization) is what gives such vigor and greatness to single lines and sentiments of Wordsworth, and to poems developing a single thought or word. It was this that made him so fond of the sonnet. His mind had not that reach and elemental movement of Milton's, which, like the trade-wind, gathered to itself thoughts and images like state-ly fleets from every quarter; some deep with silks and spicery, some brooding over the silent thunders of their battailous armaments, but all swept forward in their destined track, over the

long billows of his verse, every inch of canvas strained by the unifying breath of their common epic impulse. It was an organ that Milton mastered, mighty in compass, capable equally of the trumpet's ardors or the slim delicacy of the flute, and sometimes it bursts forth in great crashes through his prose, as if he touched it for solace in the intervals of his toil. If Wordsworth sometimes puts the trumpet to his lips, yet he lays it aside soon and willingly for his appropriate instrument, the pastoral reed. And it is not one that grew by any vulgar stream, but that which Apollo breathed through, tending the flocks of Admetus, — that which Pan endowed with every melody of the visible universe, — the same in which the soul of the despairing nymph took refuge and gifted with her dual nature, — so that ever and anon, amid the notes of human joy or sorrow, there comes suddenly a deeper and almost awful tone, thrilling us into dim consciousness of a forgotten divinity.

None of our great poets can be called popular in any exact sense of the word, for the highest poetry deals with thoughts and emotions which inhabit, like rarest sea-mosses, the doubtful limits of that shore between our abiding divine and our fluctuating human nature, rooted in the one, but living in the other, seldom laid bare, and otherwise visible only at exceptional moments of entire calm and clearness. Of no other poet except Shake-

speare have so many phrases become household words as of Wordsworth. If Pope has made current more epigrams of worldly wisdom, to Wordsworth belongs the nobler praise of having defined for us, and given us for a daily possession, those faint and vague suggestions of other-worldliness of whose gentle ministry with our baser nature the hurry and bustle of life scarcely ever allowed us to be conscious. He has won for himself a secure immortality by a depth of intuition which makes only the best minds at their best hours worthy, or indeed capable, of his companionship, and by a homely sincerity of human sympathy which reaches the humblest heart. Our language owes him gratitude for the purity and abstinence of his style, and we who speak it, for having emboldened us to take delight in simple things, and to trust ourselves to our own instincts. And he hath his reward. It needs not to bid

"Renowned Spenser lie a thought more nigh
 To learned Chaucer, and rare Beaumont lie
 A little nearer Spenser"; —

for there is no fear of crowding in that little society with whom he is now enrolled as fifth in the succession of the great English Poets.

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH.

Of the Poems in this class, "THE EVENING WALK" and "DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES" were first published in 1793. They are reprinted with some alterations that were chiefly made very soon after their publication.

* * * * *

This notice, which was written some time ago, scarcely applies to the Poem, "Descriptive Sketches," as it now stands. The corrections, though numerous, are not, however, such as to prevent its retaining with propriety a place in the class of Juvenile Pieces.

1836.

I.

EXTRACT

FROM THE CONCLUSION OF A POEM, COMPOSED IN ANTICIPATION OF LEAVING SCHOOL.

DEAR native regions, I foretell,
From what I feel at this farewell,
That, wheresoe'er my steps may tend,
And whensoe'er my course shall end,
If in that hour a single tie
Survive of local sympathy,

My soul will cast the backward view,
The longing look alone on you.

Thus, while the Sun sinks down to rest
Far in the regions of the west,
Though to the vale no parting beam
Be given, not one memorial gleam,
A lingering light he fondly throws
On the dear hills where first he rose.

1786.

II.

WRITTEN IN VERY EARLY YOUTH.

CALM is all nature as a resting wheel.
The kine are couched upon the dewy grass;
The horse alone, seen dimly as I pass,
Is cropping audibly his later meal:
Dark is the ground; a slumber seems to steal
O'er vale, and mountain, and the starless sky.
Now, in this blank of things, a harmony,
Home-felt, and home-created, comes to heal
That grief for which the senses still supply
Fresh food; for only then, when memory
Is hushed, am I at rest. My Friends! restrain
Those busy cares that would allay my pain;
Oh! leave me to myself, nor let me feel
The officious touch that makes me droop again.

III.

AN EVENING WALK.

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY.

General Sketch of the Lakes. — Author's Regret of his Youth which was passed amongst them. — Short Description of Noon. — Cascade. — Noontide Retreat. — Precipice and sloping Lights. — Face of Nature as the Sun declines. — Mountain Farm, and the Cock. — Slate-Quarry. — Sunset. — Superstition of the Country connected with that Moment. — Swans. — Female Beggar. — Twilight Sounds. — Western Lights. — Spirits. — Night. — Moonlight. — Hope. — Night Sounds. — Conclusion.

FAR from my dearest Friend, 't is mine to rove
Through bare gray dell, high wood, and pastoral
cove ;

Where Derwent rests, and listens to the roar
That stuns the tremulous cliffs of high Lodore ;
Where peace to Grasmere's lonely island leads,
To willowy hedge-rows, and to emerald meads ;
Leads to her bridge, rude church, and cottaged
grounds,

Her rocky sheepwalks, and her woodland bounds ;
Where, undisturbed by winds, Winander* sleeps,
'Mid clustering isles, and holly-sprinkled steeps ;
Where twilight glens endear my Esthwaite's shore,
And memory of departed pleasures, more.

* These lines are only applicable to the middle part of that lake.

Fair scenes, erewhile, I taught, a happy child,
The echoes of your rocks my carols wild :
The spirit sought not then, in cherished sadness,
A cloudy substitute for failing gladness.
In youth's keen eye the livelong day was bright,
The sun at morning, and the stars at night,
Alike, when first the bittern's hollow bill
Was heard, or woodcocks* roamed the moonlight
hill.

In thoughtless gayety I coursed the plain,
And hope itself was all I knew of pain ;
For then, the inexperienced heart would beat
At times, while young Content forsook her seat,
And wild Impatience, pointing upward, showed,
Through passes yet unreached, a brighter road.
Alas ! the idle tale of man is found
Depicted in the dial's moral round ;
Hope with reflection blends her social rays
To gild the total tablet of his days ;
Yet still, the sport of some malignant power,
He knows but from its shade the present hour.

But why, ungrateful, dwell on idle pain ?
To show what pleasures yet to me remain,
Say, will my Friend, with unreluctant ear,
The history of a poet's evening hear ?

* In the beginning of winter, these mountains are frequent
ed by woodcocks, which in dark nights retire into the woods.

When, in the south, the wan noon, brooding still,
-Breathed a pale steam around the glaring hill,
And shades of deep-embattled clouds were seen,
Spotting the northern cliffs with lights between ;
When crowding cattle, checked by rails that make
A fence far stretched into the shallow lake,
Lashed the cool water with their restless tails,
Or from high points of rock looked out for fanning
gales ;
When schoolboys stretched their length upon the
green ;
And round the broad-spread oak, a glimmering
scene,
In the rough fern-clad park, the herded deer
Shook the still-twinkling tail and glancing ear ;
When horses in the sunburnt intake * stood,
And vainly eyed below the tempting flood,
Or tracked the passenger, in mute distress,
With forward neck the closing gate to press —
Then, while I wandered where the huddling rill
Brightens with water-breaks the hollow ghyll †
As by enchantment, an obscure retreat
Opened at once, and stayed my devious feet.
While thick above the rill the branches close,
In rocky basin its wild waves repose,
Inverted shrubs, and moss of gloomy green,

* The word *intake* is local, and signifies a mountain inclosure. .

† Ghyll is also, I believe, a term confined to this country: ghyll, and dingle, have the same meaning.

Cling from the rocks, with pale wood-weeds between ;

And its own twilight softens the whole scene,
Save where aloft the subtle sunbeams shine
On withered briers that o'er the crags recline ;
Save where, with sparkling foam, a small cascade
Illumines, from within, the leafy shade ;
Beyond, along the vista of the brook,
Where antique roots its bustling course o'erlook,
The eye reposes on a secret bridge,*
Half gray, half shagged with ivy to its ridge ;
There, bending o'er the stream, the listless swain
Lingers behind his disappearing wain.

— Did Sabine grace adorn my living line,
Blandusia's praise, wild stream, should yield to
thine !

Never shall ruthless minister of death
'Mid thy soft glooms the glittering steel unsheath ;
No goblets shall, for thee, be crowned with flowers,
No kid with piteous outcry thrill thy bowers ;
The mystic shapes that by thy margin rove
A more benignant sacrifice approve, —
A mind, that, in a calm, angelic mood
Of happy wisdom, meditating good,
Beholds, of all from her high powers required,
Much done, and much designed, and more desired, —

* The reader who has made the tour of this country will recognize, in this description, the features which characterize the lower waterfall in the grounds of Rydal.

Harmonious thoughts, a soul by truth refined,
Enure affection for all human kind.

*union with all
mankind*

Dear Brook, farewell ! To-morrow's noon again
Shall hide me, wooing long thy wild-wood strain ;
But now the sun has gained his western road,
And eve's mild hour invites my steps abroad.

While, near the midway cliff, the silvered kite
In many a whistling circle wheels her flight ;
Slant watery lights, from parting clouds, apace
Travel along the precipice's base ;
Cheering its naked waste of scattered stone,
By lichens gray, and scanty moss, o'ergrown ;
Where scarce the foxglove peeps, or thistle's beard,
And restless stone-chat, all day long, is heard.

How pleasant, as the sun declines, to view
The spacious landscape change in form and hue !
Here, vanish, as in mist, before a flood
Of bright obscurity, hill, lawn, and wood ;
There, objects, by the searching beams betrayed,
Come forth, and here retire in purple shade ;
Even the white stems of birch, the cottage white,
Soften their glare before the mellow light ;
The skiffs, at anchor where with umbrage wide
Yon chestnuts half the latticed boat-house hide,
Shed from their sides, that face the sun's slant beam,
Strong flakes of radiance on the tremulous stream :
Raised by yon travelling flock, a dusty cloud

Mounts from the road, and spreads its moving
shroud ;

The shepherd, all involved in wreaths of fire,
Now shows a shadowy speck, and now is lost entire.

Into a gradual calm the breezes sink,
A blue rim borders all the lake's still brink ;
There doth the twinkling aspen's foliage sleep,
And insects clothe, like dust, the glassy deep :
And now, on every side, the surface breaks
Into blue spots, and slowly lengthening streaks ;
Here, plots of sparkling water tremble bright
With thousand thousand twinkling points of light ;
There, waves that, hardly weltering, die away,
Tip their smooth ridges with a softer ray ;
And now the whole wide lake in deep repose
Is hushed, and like a burnished mirror glows,
Save where, along the shady western marge,
Coasts, with industrious oar, the charcoal barge.

Their panniered train a group of potters goad,
Winding from side to side up the steep road ;
The peasant, from yon cliff of fearful edge
Shot, down the headlong path darts with his sledge ;
Bright beams the lonely mountain-horse illumine,
Feeding 'mid purple heath, "green rings,"* and
broom ;
While the sharp slope the slackened team confounds,

* "Vivid rings of green."—GREENWOOD'S *Poem on Shooting*.

Downward the ponderous timber-wain resounds ;
In foamy breaks the rill, with merry song,
Dashed o'er the rough rock, lightly leaps along ;
From lonesome chapel at the mountain's feet,
Three humble bells their rustic chime repeat ;
Sounds from the water-side the hammered boat ;
And *blasted* quarry thunders, heard remote !

Even here, amid the sweep of endless woods,
Blue pomp of lakes, high cliffs and falling floods,
Not undelightful are the simplest charms,
Found by the grassy door of mountain farms.

Sweetly ferocious,* round his native walks,
Pride of his sister-wives, the monarch stalks ;
Spur-clad his nervous feet, and firm his tread ;
A crest of purple tops the warrior's head.
Bright sparks his black and rolling eyeball hurls
Afar, his tail he closes and unfurls ;
On tiptoe reared, he strains his clarion throat,
Threatened by faintly answering farms remote :
Again with his shrill voice the mountain rings,
While, flapped with conscious pride, resound his
wings !

Where, mixed with graceful birch, the sombrous
pine

* "Dolcemente feroce." — TASSO. In this description of the cock, I remembered a spirited one of the same animal in L'Agriculture, ou les Géorgiques Françaises, of M. Rossuet.

And yew-tree o'er the silver rocks recline ;
I love to mark the quarry's moving trains,
Dwarf panniered steeds, and men, and numerous
wains :

How busy all the enormous hive within,
While Echo dallies with its various din !
Some (hear you not their chisels' clinking sound ?)
Toil, small as pigmies in the gulf profound ;
Some, din between the lofty cliffs descried,
O'erwalk the slender plank from side to side ;
These, by the pale-blue rocks that ceaseless ring,
In airy baskets hanging, work and sing.

Just where a cloud above the mountain rears
An edge all flame, the broadening sun appears ;
A long blue bar its ægis orb divides,
And breaks the spreading of its golden tides ;
And now that orb has touched the purple steep
Whose softened image penetrates the deep.
'Cross the calm lake's blue shades the cliffs aspire,
With towers and woods, a "prospect all on fire" ;
While coves and secret hollows, through a ray
Of fainter gold, a purple gleam betray.
Each slip of lawn the broken rocks between
Shines in the light with more than earthly green :
Deep yellow beams the scattered stems illumine,
Far in the level forest's central gloom :
Waving his hat, the shepherd, from the vale,
Directs his winding dog the cliffs to scale, —
The dog, loud barking, 'mid the glittering rocks,

Hunts, where his master points, the intercepted flocks.

Where oaks o'erhang the road, the radiance shoots
On tawny earth, wild weeds, and twisted roots ;
The druid-stones a brightened ring unfold ;
And all the babbling brooks are liquid gold ;
Sunk to a curve, the day-star lessens still,
Gives one bright glance, and drops behind the hill.*

In these secluded vales, if village fame,
Confirmed by hoary hairs, belief may claim,
When up the hills, as now, retired the light,
Strange apparitions mocked the shepherd's sight.✓

The form appears of one that spurs his steed
Midway along the hill with desperate speed ;
Unhurt pursues his lengthened flight, while all
Attend, at every stretch, his headlong fall.
Anon, appears a brave, a gorgeous show
Of horsemen-shadows moving to and fro ;
At intervals imperial banners stream,
And now the van reflects the solar beam ;
The rear through iron brown betrays a sullen gleam.
While silent stands the admiring crowd below,
Silent the visionary warriors go,
Winding in ordered ðomp their upward way,†✓

* From Thomson.

† See a description of an appearance of this kind in Clark's Survey of the Lakes, accompanied by vouchers of its veracity, that may amuse the reader.

Till the last banner of their long array
Has disappeared, and every trace is fled
Of splendor — save the beacon's spiry head
Tipt with eve's latest gleam of burning red.

Now, while the solemn evening shadows sail,
On slowly waving pinions, down the vale;
And, fronting the bright west, yon oak entwines
Its darkening boughs and leaves, in stronger lines,
'Tis pleasant near the tranquil lake to stray,
Where, winding on along some secret bay,
The swan uplifts his chest, and backward flings
His neck, a varying arch, between his towering
wings:

The eye that marks the gliding creature sees
How graceful, pride can be, and how majestic, ease.
While tender cares and mild domestic loves
With furtive watch pursue her as she moves,
The female with a meeker charm succeeds,
And her brown little ones around her leads,
Nibbling the water-lilies as they pass,
Or playing wanton with the floating grass.
She, in a mother's care, her beauty's pride
Forgetting, calls the wearied to her side;
Alternately they mount her back, and rest
Close by her mantling wings' embraces prest.

Long may they float upon this flood serene;
Theirs be these holms untrodden, still, and green,
Where leafy shades fence off the blustering gale,

And breathes in peace the lily of the vale !
Yon isle, which feels not even the milkmaid's feet,
Yet hears her song, "by distance made more sweet,"
Yon isle conceals their home, their hut-like bower :
Green water-rushes overspread the floor ;
Long grass and willows form the woven wall,
And swings above the roof the poplar tall.
Thence issuing often with unwieldy stalk,
They crush with broad black feet their flowery
walk ;

Or, from the neighboring water, hear at morn
The hound, the horse's tread, and mellow horn ;
Involve their serpent-necks in changeful rings,
Rolled wantonly between their slippery wings,
Or, starting up with noise and rude delight,
Force half upon the wave their cumbrous flight.

Fair Swan ! by all a mother's joys caressed,
Haply some wretch has eyed, and called thee
blessed ;

When with her infants, from some shady seat
By the lake's edge, she rose — to face the noontide
heat ;

Or taught their limbs along the dusty road
A few short steps to totter with their load.

I see her now, denied to lay her head,
On cold blue nights, in hut or straw-built shed,
Turn to a silent smile their sleepy cry,
By pointing to the gliding moon on high.

— When low-hung clouds each star of summer
hide,
And fireless are the valleys far and wide,
Where the brook brawls along the public road
Dark with bat-haunted ashes stretching broad,
Oft has she taught them on her lap to lay
The shining glow-worm ; or, in heedless play,
Toss it from hand to hand, disquieted ;
While others, not unseen, are free to shed
Green unmolested light upon their mossy bed.

Oh ! when the sleety showers her path assail,
And like a torrent roars the headstrong gale ;
No more her breath can thaw their fingers cold,
Their frozen arms her neck no more can fold ;
Weak roof a cowering form two babes to shield,
And faint the fire a dying heart can yield !
ress the sad kiss, fond mother ! vainly fears
Thy flooded cheek to wet them with its tears ;
No tears can chill them, and no bosom warms,
Thy breast their death-bed, confined in thine arms !

Sweet are the sounds that mingle from afar,
Heard by calm lakes, as peeps the folding star,
Where the duck dabbles 'mid the rustling sedge,
And feeding pike starts from the water's edge,
Or the swan stirs the reeds, his neck and bill
Wetting, that drip upon the water still ;
And heron, as resounds the trodden shore,
Shoots upward, darting his long neck before.

Now, with religious awe, the farewell light
Blends with the solemn coloring of night ;
'Mid groves of clouds that crest the mountain's brow,
And round the west's proud lodge their shadows
throw,

Like Una shining on her gloomy way,
The half-seen form of Twilight roams astray ;
Shedding, through paly loopholes mild and small,
Gleams that upon the lake's still bosom fall ;
Soft o'er the surface creep those lustres pale,
Tracking the motions of the fitful gale.

With restless interchange, at once the bright
Wins on the shade, the shade upon the light.

No favored eye was e'er allowed to gaze

On lovelier spectacle in faery days ;

When gentle Spirits urged a sportive chase,

Brushing with lucid wands the water's face ;

While music, stealing round the glimmering deeps,
Charmed the tall circle of the enchanted steeps.

—The lights are vanished from the watery plains .

No wreck of all the pageantry remains.

Unheeded night has overcome the vales :

On the dark earth the wearied vision fails ;

The latest lingerer of the forest train,

The lone black fir, forsakes the faded plain ;

Last evening sight, the cottage smoke, no more,

Lost in the thickened darkness, glimmers hoar ;

And, towering from the sullen dark-brown mere,

Like a black wall, the mountain steeps appear.

— Now o'er the soothed, accordant heart we feel

A sympathetic twilight slowly steal,
And ever, as we fondly muse, we find
The soft gloom deepening on the tranquil mind.
Stay ! pensive, sadly-pleasing visions, stay !
Ah no ! as fades the vale, they fade away :
Yet still the tender, vacant gloom remains ;
Still the cold cheek its shuddering tear retains.

The bird, who ceased, with fading light, to thread
Silent the hedge or steamy rivulet's bed,
From his gray re-appearing tower shall soon
Salute with gladsome note the rising moon,
While with a hoary light she frosts the ground,
And pours a deeper blue to Æther's bound ;
Pleased, as she moves, her pomp of clouds to fold
In robes of azure, fleecy-white, and gold.

Above yon eastern hill, where darkness broods
O'er all its vanished dells, and lawns, and woods ;
Where but a mass of shade the sight can trace,
Even now she shows, half veiled, her lovely face :
Across the gloomy valley flings her light,
Far to the western slopes with hamlets white ;
And gives, where woods the checkered upland strew,
To the green corn of summer, autumn's hue.

Thus Hope, first pouring from her blessed horn
Her dawn, far lovelier than the moon's own morn,
Till higher mounted, strives in vain to cheer
The weary hills, impervious, blackening near ;

Yet does she still, undaunted, throw the while
On darling spots remote her tempting smile.

Even now she decks for me a distant scene,
(For dark and broad the gulf of time between,)
Gilding that cottage with her fondest ray,
(Sole bourn, sole wish, sole object of my way ;
How fair its lawns and sheltering woods appear !
How sweet its streamlet murmurs in mine ear!)
Where we, my Friend, to happy days shall rise,
Till our small share of hardly paining sighs
(For sighs will ever trouble human breath)
Creep hushed into the tranquil breast of death.

But now the clear bright Moon her zenith gains,
And, rimy without speck, extend the plains :
The deepest cleft the mountain's front displays
Scarce hides a shadow from her searching rays ;
From the dark-blue faint silvery threads divide
The hills, while gleams below the azure tide ;
Time softly treads ; throughout the landscape
 breathes

A peace enlivened, not disturbed, by wreaths
Of charcoal-smoke, that, o'er the fallen wood,
Steal down the hill, and spread along the flood.

The song of mountain streams, unheard by day,
Now hardly heard, beguiles my homeward way.
Air listens, like the sleeping water, still,
To catch the spiritual music of the hill,

Broke only by the slow clock tolling deep,
Or shout that wakes the ferry-man from sleep,
The echoed hoof nearing the distant shore,
The boat's first motion, made with dashing oar ;
Sound of closed gate, across the water borne,
Hurrying the timid hare through rustling corn ;
The sportive outcry of the mocking owl ;
And at long intervals the mill-dog's howl ;
The distant forge's swinging thump profound ;
Or yell, in the deep woods, of lonely hound.

1787-89

IV.

LINES

WRITTEN WHILE SAILING IN A BOAT AT EVENING

How richly glows the water's breast
Before us, tinged with evening hues,
While, facing thus the crimson west,
The boat her silent course pursues !
And see how dark the backward stream.
A little moment past so smiling !
And still, perhaps, with faithless gleam
Some other loiterers beguiling.

Such views the youthful Bard allure ;
But, heedless of the following gloom,
He deems their colors shall endure
Till peace go with him to the tomb.

—And let him nurse his fond deceit,
And what if he must die in sorrow !
Who would not cherish dreams so sweet,
Though grief and pain may come to morrow?

1789.

V.

REMEMBRANCE OF COLLINS,

COMPOSED UPON THE THAMES NEAR RICHMOND.

GLIDE gently, thus for ever glide,
O Thames ! that other bards may see
As lovely visions by thy side
As now, fair river ! come to me.
O, glide, fair stream ! for ever so
Thy quiet soul on all bestowing,
Till all our minds for ever flow
As thy deep waters now are flowing.

Vain thought ! — Yet be as now thou art,
That in thy waters may be seen
The image of a poet's heart,
How bright, how solemn, how serene !
Such as did once the Poet bless,
Who, murmuring here a later * ditty,

* Collins's Ode on the Death of Thomson, the last written, I believe, of the poems which were published during his lifetime. This Ode is also alluded to in the next stanza.

Could find no refuge from distress
But in the milder grief of pity.

Now let us, as we float along,
For *him* suspend the dashing oar ;
And pray that never child of song
May know that Poet's sorrows more.
How calm ! how still ! the only sound,
The dripping of the oar suspended !
— The evening darkness gathers round,
By virtue's holiest Powers attended.

1739.

VI.

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES

TAKEN

DURING A PEDESTRIAN TOUR AMONG THE ALPS.

TO

THE REV. ROBERT JONES,

FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

DEAR SIR:—

However desirous I might have been of giving you proofs of the high place you hold in my esteem, I should have been cautious of wounding your delicacy by thus publicly addressing you, had not the circumstance of our having been com-

panions among the Alps seemed to give this dedication a propriety sufficient to do away any scruples which your modesty might otherwise have suggested.

In inscribing this little work to you, I consult my heart. You know well how great is the difference between two companions lolling in a post-chaise, and two travellers plodding slowly along the road, side by side, each with his little knapsack of necessities upon his shoulders. How much more of heart between the two latter!

I am happy in being conscious that I shall have one reader who will approach the conclusion of these few pages with regret. You they must certainly interest, in reminding you of moments to which you can hardly look back without a pleasure not the less dear from a shade of melancholy. You will meet with few images without recollecting the spot where we observed them together; consequently, whatever is feeble in my design, or spiritless in my coloring, will be amply supplied by your own memory.

With still greater propriety I might have inscribed to you a description of some of the features of your native mountains, through which we have wandered together, in the same manner, with so much pleasure. But the sea-sunsets, which give such splendor to the vale of Clwyd, Snowdon, the chair of Idris, the quiet village of Bethgelert, Menai and her Druids, the Alpine steepes of the Conway, and the still more interesting windings of the wizard stream of the Dee, remain yet untouched. Apprehensive that my pencil may never be exercised on these subjects, I cannot let slip this opportunity of thus publicly assuring you with how much affection and esteem

I am, dear Sir,

Most sincerely yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

London, 1793.

Happiness (if she had been to be found on Earth) among the Charms of Nature. — Pleasures of the Pedestrian Traveller. — Author crosses France to the Alps. — Present State of

the Grande Chartreuse. — Lake of Como. — Time, Sunset. — Same Scene, Twilight. — Same Scene, Morning; its voluptuous Character; Old Man and Forest-cottage Music. — River Tusa. — Via Mala and Grison Gypsy. — Sckellenen-thal. — Lake of Uri. — Stormy Sunset. — Chapel of William Tell. — Force of local Emotion. — Chamois-chaser. — View of the higher Alps. — Manner of Life of a Swiss Mountaineer, interspersed with Views of the higher Alps. — Golden Age of the Alps. — Life and Views continued. — Ranz des Vaches, famous Swiss Air. — Abbey of Einsiedlen and its Pilgrims. — Valley of Chamouny. — Mont Blanc. — Slavery of Savoy. — Influence of Liberty on Cottage Happiness. — France. — Wish for the Extirpation of Slavery. — Conclusion.

WERE there, below, a spot of holy ground
 Where from distress a refuge might be found,
 And solitude prepare the soul for heaven;
 Sure, nature's God that spot to man had given
 Where falls the purple morning far and wide
 In flakes of light upon the mountain-side;
 Where with loud voice the power of water shakes
 The leafy wood, or sleeps in quiet lakes.

Yet not unrecompensed the man shall roam,
 Who at the call of summer quits his home,
 And plods through some wide realm o'er vale and
 height,
 Though seeking only holiday delight;
 At least, not owning to himself an aim
 To which the sage would give a prouder name.
 No gains too cheaply earned his fancy cloy,
 Though every passing zephyr whispers joy;
 Brisk toil, alternating with ready ease,

Feeds the clear current of his sympathies.
For him sod-seats the cottage-door adorn ;
And peeps the far-off spire, his evening bourn !
Dear is the forest frowning o'er his head,
And dear the velvet green-sward to his tread :
Moves there a cloud o'er mid-day's flaming eye ?
Upward he looks — " and calls it luxury " :
Kind Nature's charities his steps attend ;
In every babbling brook he finds a friend ;
While chastening thoughts of sweetest use, be-
stowed

By wisdom, moralize his pensive road.
Host of his welcome inn, the noontide bower,
To his spare meal he calls the passing poor ;
He views the sun uplift his golden fire,
Or sink, with heart alive like Memnon's lyre ; *
Blesses the moon that comes, with kindly ray,
To light him shaken by his rugged way.
Back from his sight no bashful children steal ;
He sits a brother at the cottage meal ;
His humble looks no shy restraint impart ;
Around him plays at will the virgin heart.
While unsuspended wheels the village dance,
The maidens eye him with inquiring glance,
Much wondering by what fit of crazing care,
Or desperate love, bewildered, he came there.

* The lyre of Memnon is reported to have emitted melancholy or cheerful tones, as it was touched by the sun's evening or morning rays.

A hope, that prudence could not then approve,
That clung to Nature with a truant's love,
O'er Gallia's wastes of corn my footsteps led ;
Her files of road-elms, high above my head
In long drawn-vista, rustling in the breeze ;
Or where her pathways straggle as they please
By lonely farms and secret villages.
But lo ! the Alps ascending white in air,
Toy with the sun and glitter from afar.

And now, emerging from the forest's gloom,
I greet thee, Chartreuse, while I mourn thy doom,
Whither is fled that Power whose frown severe
Awed sober Reason till she crouched in fear ?
That Silence, once in deathlike fetters bound,
Chains that were loosened only by the sound
Of holy rites chanted in measured round ?
— The voice of blasphemy the fane alarms,
The cloister startles at the gleam of arms.
The thundering tube the aged angler hears,
Bent o'er the groaning flood that sweeps away his
tears.

Cloud-piercing pine-trees nod their troubled heads,
Spires, rocks, and lawns a browner night o'er-
spreads ;

Strong terror checks the female peasant's sighs,
And start the astonished shades at female eyes.
From Bruno's forest screams the affrighted jay,
And slow the insulted eagle wheels away.
A viewless flight of laughing Demons mock

The Cross, by angels planted * on the aerial rock.
The "parting Genius" sighs with hollow breath
Along the mystic streams of Life and Death.†
Swelling the outcry dull, that long resounds
Portentous through her old woods' trackless bounds,
Vallombre,‡ 'mid her falling fanes, deplores,
For ever broke, the sabbath of her bowers.

More pleased, my foot the hidden margin roves
Of Como, bosomed deep in chestnut groves.
No meadows thrown between, the giddy steeps
Tower, bare or sylvan, from the narrow deeps.
— To towns, whose shades of no rude noise complain,
From ringing team apart and grating wain, —
To flat-roofed towns, that touch the water's bound,
Or lurk in woody sunless glens profound,
Or, from the bending rocks, obtrusive cling,
And o'er the whitened wave their shadows fling, —
The pathway leads, as round the steeps it twines;
And Silence loves its purple roof of vines.
The loitering traveller hence, at evening, sees
From rock-hewn steps the sail between the trees;
Or marks, 'mid opening cliffs, fair dark-eyed maids
Tend the small harvest of their garden glades;
Or stops the solemn mountain-shades to view

* Alluding to crosses seen on the tops of the spiry rocks of Chartreuse, which have every appearance of being inaccessible.

† Names of rivers at the Chartreuse.

‡ Name of one of the valleys of the Chartreuse.

Stretch o'er the pictured mirror broad and blue,
And track the yellow lights from steep to steep,
As up the opposing hills they slowly creep.
Aloft, here, half a village shines, arrayed
In golden light ; half hides itself in shade :
While, from amid the darkened roofs, the spire,
Restlessly flashing, seems to mount like fire :
There, all unshaded, blazing forests throw
Rich golden verdure on the lake below.
Slow glides the sail along the illumined shore,
And steals into the shade the lazy oar ;
Soft bosoms breathe around contagious sighs,
And amorous music on the water dies.

How blest, delicious scene ! the eye that greets
Thy open beauties, or thy lone retreats ;
Beholds the unwearied sweep of wood that scales
Thy cliffs ; the endless waters of thy vales ;
Thy lowly cots that sprinkle all the shore,
Each with its household boat beside the door ;
Thy torrent shooting from the clear-blue sky ;
Thy towns, that cleave, like swallows' nests, on high ;
That glimmer hoar in eve's last light, descried
Dim from the twilight water's shaggy side,
Whence lutes and voices down the enchanted woods
Steal, and compose the oar-forgotten floods ;
Thy lake, that, streaked or dappled, blue or gray,
'Mid smoking woods gleams hid from morning's ray
Slow-travelling down the western hills, to enfold
Its green-tinged margin in a blaze of gold ;

Thy glittering steeples, whence the matin bell
Calls forth the woodman from his desert cell,
And quickens the blithe sound of oars that pass
Along the steaming lake, to early mass.
But now farewell to each and all, — adieu
To every charm, and last and chief to you,
Ye lovely maidens that in noontide shade
Rest near your little plots of wheaten glade ;
To all that binds the soul in powerless trance,
Lip-dewing song, and ringlet-tossing dance ;
Where sparkling eyes and breaking smiles illumine
The sylvan cabin's lute-enlivened gloom.
— Alas ! the very murmur of the streams
Breathes o'er the failing soul voluptuous dreams,
While Slavery, forcing the sunk mind to dwell
On joys that might disgrace the captive's cell,
Her shameless timbrel shakes on Como's marge,
And lures from bay to bay the vocal barge.

Yet are thy softer arts with power indued
To soothe and cheer the poor man's solitude.
By silent cottage-doors, the peasant's home
Left vacant for the day, I loved to roam.
But once I pierced the mazes of a wood
In which a cabin undeserted stood ;
There an old man an olden measure scanned
On a rude viol touched with withered hand.
As lambs or fawns in April clustering lie
Under a hoary oak's thin canopy,
Stretched at his feet, with steadfast upward eye,

His children's children listened to the sound ;
— A Hermit with his family around !

But let us hence ; for fair Locarno smiles
Embowered in walnut slopes and citron isles :
Or seek at eve the banks of Tusa's stream,
Where, 'mid dim towers and woods, her * waters
gleam.

From the bright wave, in solemn gloom, retire
The dull-red steeps, and, darkening still, aspire
To where afar rich orange lustres glow
Round undistinguished clouds, and rocks, and snow :
Or, led where Via Mala's chasms confine
The indignant waters of the infant Rhine,
Hang o'er the abyss, whose else impervious gloom
His burning eyes with fearful light illumine.

The mind condemned, without reprieve, to go
O'er life's long deserts with its charge of woe,
With sad congratulation joins the train
Where beasts and men together o'er the plain
Move on, — a mighty caravan of pain :
Hope, strength, and courage, social suffering brings,
Freshening the wilderness with shades and springs.
— There be whose lot far otherwise is cast :
Sole human tenant of the piny waste,
By choice or doom a gypsy wanders here,

* The river along whose banks you descend in crossing the
Alps by the Simplon Pass.

A nursling babe her only comforter ;
Lo, where she sits beneath yon shaggy rock,
A cowering shape half hid in curling smoke !

When lightning among clouds and mountain-
snows

Predominates, and darkness comes and goes,
And the fierce torrent, at the flashes broad,
Starts, like a horse, beside the glaring road, —
She seeks a covert from the battering shower
In the roofed bridge ; * the bridge, in that dread
hour,
Itself all trembling at the torrent's power.

Nor is she more at ease on some *still* night,
When not a star supplies the comfort of its light ;
Only the waning moon hangs dull and red
Above a melancholy mountain's head,
Then sets. In total gloom the Vagrant sighs,
Stoops her sick head, and shuts her weary eyes ;
Or on her fingers counts the distant clock,
Or, to the drowsy crow of midnight cock,
Listens, 'or quakes while from the forest's gulf
Howls near and nearer yet the famished wolf.

From the green vale of Urseren smooth and wide
Descend we now, the maddened Reuss our guide ;

* Most of the bridges among the Alps are of wood, and covered: these bridges have a heavy appearance, and rather injure the effect of the scenery in some places.

By rocks that, shutting out the blessed day,
Cling tremblingly to rocks as loose as they ;
By cells,* upon whose image, while he prays,
The kneeling peasant scarcely dares to gaze ;
By many a votive death-cross † planted near,
And watered duly with the pious tear,
That faded silent from the upward eye,
Unmoved with each rude form of peril nigh ;
Fixed on the anchor left by Him who saves
Alike in whelming snows, and roaring waves.

But soon a peopled region on the sight
Opens, — a little world of calm delight ;
Where mists, suspended on the expiring gale,
Spread rooflike o'er the deep secluded vale,
And beams of evening, slipping in between,
Gently illuminate a sober scene : —
Here, on the brown wood-cottages ‡ they sleep,
There, over rock or sloping pasture creep.
On as we journey, in clear view displayed,
The still vale lengthens underneath its shade
Of low-hung vapor : on the freshened mead
The green light sparkles ; — the dim bowers recede.

* The Catholic religion prevails here: these cells are, as is well known, very common in the Catholic countries, planted, like the Roman tombs, along the road-side.

† Crosses, commemorative of the deaths of travellers by the fall of snow, and other accidents, are very common along this dreadful road.

‡ The houses in the more retired Swiss valleys are all built of wood.

While pastoral pipes and streams the landscape
 lull,
And bells of passing mules that tinkle dull,
In solemn shapes before the admiring eye
Dilated hang its misty pines on high,
Huge convent domes with pinnacles and towers,
And antique castles seen through gleamy showers.

From such romantic dreams, my soul, awake !
To sterner pleasure, where, by Uri's lake
In Nature's pristine majesty outspread,
Winds neither road nor path for foot to tread :
The rocks rise naked as a wall, or stretch,
Far o'er the water, hung with groves of beech ;
Aerial pines from loftier steeps ascend,
Nor stop but where creation seems to end.
Yet here and there, if 'mid the savage scene
Appears a scanty plot of smiling green,
Up from the lake a zigzag path will creep,
To reach a small wood-hut hung boldly on the
 steep.

— Before those thresholds, (never can they know
The face of traveller passing to and fro,)
No peasant leans upon his pole, to tell
For whom at morning tolled the funeral bell ;
Their watch-dog ne'er his angry bark foregoes,
Touched by the beggar's moan of human woes ;
The shady porch ne'er offered a cool seat
To pilgrims overcome by summer's heat.
Yet thither the world's business finds its way

At times, and tales unsought beguile the day,
And *there* are those fond thoughts which Solitude,
However stern, is powerless to exclude.
There doth the maiden watch her lover's sail
Approaching, and upbraid the tardy gale ;
At midnight listens till his parting oar,
And its last echo, can be heard no more.

And what if ospreys, cormorants, herons, cry,
Amid tempestuous vapors driving by,
Or hovering over wastes too bleak to rear
That common growth of earth, the foodful ear ;
Where the green apple shrivels on the spray,
And pines the unripened pear in summer's kind-
 liest ray ;
Contentment shares the desolate domain
With Independence, child of high Disdain.
Exulting 'mid the winter of the skies,
Shy as the jealous chamois, Freedom flies,
And grasps by fits her sword, and often eyes ;
And sometimes, as from rock to rock she bounds,
The Patriot nymph starts at imagined sounds,
And, wildly pausing, oft she hangs aghast,
Whether some old Swiss air hath checked her
 haste
Or thrill of Spartan life is caught between the blast.

Swoln with incessant rains from hour to hour,
All day the floods a deepening murmur pour :
The sky is veiled, and every cheerful sight :

Dark is the region as with coming night ;
But what a sudden burst of overpowering light !
Triumphant on the bosom of the storm,
Glances the wheeling eagle's glorious form !
Eastward, in long perspective glittering, shine
The wood-crowned cliffs that o'er the lake recline ;
Those lofty cliffs a hundred streams unfold,
At once to pillars turned that flame with gold :
Behind his sail the peasant shrinks, to shun
The *west*, that burns like one dilated sun,
A crucible of mighty compass, felt
By mountains, glowing till they seem to melt.

But, lo ! the boatman, overawed, before
The pictured fane of Tell suspends his oar ;
Confused the Marathonian tale appears,
While his eyes sparkle with heroic tears.
And who, that walks where men of ancient days
Have wrought with godlike arm the deeds of praise,
Feels not the spirit of the place control,
Or rouse and agitate his laboring soul ?
Say, who, by thinking on Canadian hills,
Or wild Aosta lulled by Alpine rills,
On Zutphen's plain ; or on that highland dell,
Through which rough Garry cleaves his way, can
tell
What high resolves exalt the tenderest thought
Of him whom passion rivets to the spot,
Where breathed the gale that caught Wolfe's hap-
piest sigh,

And the last sunbeam fell on Bayard's eye ;
Where bleeding Sidney from the cup retired,
And glad Dundee in "faint huzzas " expired ?

But now with other mind I stand alone
Upon the summit of this naked cone,
And watch the fearless chamois-hunter chase
His prey, through tracts abrupt of desolate space,
* Through vacant worlds where Nature never gave
A brook to murmur or a bough to wave,
Which unsubstantial Phantoms sacred keep ;
Through worlds where Life, and Voice, and Motion
sleep ;

Where silent Hours their death-like sway extend,
Save when the avalanche breaks loose, to rend
Its way with uproar, till the ruin, drowned
In some dense wood or gulf of snow profound,
Mocks the dull ear of Time with deaf abortive
sound.

— 'Tis his, while wandering on from height to
height,

To see a planet's pomp and steady light
In the least star of scarce-appearing night ;
While the pale moon moves near him, on the bound
Of ether, shining with diminished round,
And far and wide the icy summits blaze,
Rejoicing in the glory of her rays :

* For most of the images in the next sixteen verses, I am indebted to M. Raymond's interesting observations annexed to his translation of Coxe's Tour in Switzerland.

To him the day-star glitters small and bright,
Shorn of its beams, insufferably white,
And he can look beyond the sun, and view
Those fast-receding depths of sable blue
Flying till vision can no more pursue !
— At once bewildering mists around him close,
And cold and hunger are his least of woes ;
The Demon of the snow, with angry roar
Descending, shuts for aye his prison door.
Soon with despair's whole weight his spirits
sink ;
Bread has he none, the snow must be his drink ;
And, ere his eyes can close upon the day,
The eagle of the Alps o'ershades her prey.

Now couch thyself where, heard with fear afar,
Thunders through echoing pines the headlong
Aar ;

Or rather stay to taste the mild delights
Of pensive Underwalden's * pastoral heights.
— Is there who 'mid these awful wilds has seen
The native Genii walk the mountain green ?
Or heard, while other worlds their charms reveal,
Soft music o'er the aerial summit steal ?
While o'er the desert, answering every close,
Rich steam of sweetest perfume comes and goes.
— And sure there is a secret Power that reigns

* The people of this Canton are supposed to be of a more melancholy disposition than the other inhabitants of the Alps ; this, if true, may proceed from their living more secluded.

Here, where no trace of man the spot profanes,
Nought but the *chalets*,* flat and bare, on high
Suspended 'mid the quiet of the sky ;
Or distant herds that pasturing upward creep,
And, not untended, climb the dangerous steep.
How still ! no irreligious sound or sight
Rouses the soul from her severe delight.
An idle voice the sabbath region fills
Of Deep that calls to Deep across the hills,
And with that voice accords the soothing sound
Of drowsy bells, for ever tinkling round ;
Faint wail of eagle melting into blue
Beneath the cliffs, and pine-wood's steady *sugh* † ;
The solitary heifer's deepened low ;
Or rumbling, heard remote, of falling snow:
All motions, sounds, and voices, far and nigh,
Blend in a music of tranquillity ;
Save when, a stranger seen below, the boy
Shouts from the echoing hills with savage joy.

When, from the sunny breast of open seas,
And bays with myrtle fringed, the southern breeze
Comes on to gladden April with the sight
Of green isles widening on each snow-clad height ;
When shouts and lowing herds the valley fill,
And louder torrents stun the noon-tide hill,

* This picture is from the middle region of the Alps. *Chalets* are summer huts for the Swiss herdsmen.

† *Sugh*, a Scotch word expressive of the sound of the wind through the trees.

The pastoral Swiss begin the cliffs to scale,
Leaving to silence the deserted vale ;
And like the Patriarchs in their simple age
Move, as the verdure leads, from stage to stage ;
High and more high in summer's heat they go,
And hear the rattling thunder far below ;
Or steal beneath the mountains, half deterred,
Where huge rocks tremble to the bellowing herd.

One I behold who, 'cross the foaming flood,
Leaps with a bound of graceful hardihood ;
Another high on that green ledge ; — he gained
The tempting spot with every sinew strained ;
And downward thence a knot of grass he throws,
Food for his beasts in time of winter snows.
— Far different life from what Tradition hoar
Transmits of happier lot in times of yore !
Then Summer lingered long ; and honey flowed
From out the rocks, the wild bees' safe abode :
Continual waters welling cheered the waste,
And plants were wholesome, now of deadly taste :
Nor Winter yet his frozen stores had piled,
Usurping where the fairest herbage smiled :
Nor Hunger driven the herds from pastures bare,
To climb the treacherous cliffs for scanty fare.
Then the milk-thistle flourished through the land,
And forced the full-swoln udder to demand,
Thrice every day, the pail and welcome hand.
Thus does the father to his children tell
Of banished bliss, by fancy loved too well.

Alas ! that human guilt provoked the rod
Of angry Nature to avenge her God.
Still, Nature, ever just, to him imparts
Joys only given to uncorrupted hearts.

'Tis morn : with gold the verdant mountain glows
More high, the snowy peaks with hues of rose.
Far-stretched beneath the many-tinted hills,
A mighty waste of mist the valley fills,
A solemn sea ! whose billows wide around
Stand motionless, to awful silence bound :
Pines, on the coast, through mists their tops uprear,
That like to leaning masts of stranded ships appear.
A single chasm, a gulf of gloomy blue,
Gapes in the centre of the sea ; and, through
That dark, mysterious gulf ascending, sound
Innumerable streams with roar profound.
Mount through the nearer vapors notes of birds,
And merry flageolet ; the low of herds,
The bark of dogs, the heifer's tinkling bell,
Talk, laughter, and perchance a church-tower knell :
Think not, the peasant from aloft has gazed
And heard with heart unmoved, with soul unraised :
Nor is his spirit less enrapt, nor less
Alive to independent happiness,
Then, when he lies, outstretched, at eventide,
Upon the fragrant mountain's purple side :
For as the pleasures of his simple day
Beyond his native valley seldom stray,
Nought round its darling precincts can he find

But brings some past enjoyment to his mind ;
While Hope, reclining upon Pleasure's urn,
Binds her wild wreaths, and whispers his return.

Once, Man entirely free, alone and wild,
Was blest as free, — for he was Nature's child.
He, all superior but his God disdained,
Walked none restraining, and by none restrained:
Confessed no law but what his reason taught,
Did all he wished, and wished but what he ought.
As man in his primeval dower arrayed
The image of his glorious Sire displayed,
Even so, by faithful Nature guarded, here
The traces of primeval man appear ;
The simple dignity no forms debase ;
The eye sublime, and surly lion-grace :
The slave of none, of beasts alone the lord,
His book he prizes, nor neglects his sword ;
— Well taught by that to feel his rights, prepared
With this “ the blessings he enjoys to guard.”

And, as his native hills encircle ground
For many a marvellous victory renowned,
The work of Freedom daring to oppose,
With few in arms,* innumerable foes,

* Alluding to several battles which the Swiss in very small numbers have gained over their oppressors, the house of Austria; and, in particular, to one fought at Næffels near Glarus, where three hundred and thirty men are said to have defeated an army of between fifteen and twenty thousand Austrians.

When to those famous fields his steps are led,
An unknown power connects him with the dead :
For images of other worlds are there ;
Awful the light, and holy is the air.
Fitfully, and in flashes, through his soul,
Like sun-lit tempests, troubled transports roll ;
His bosom heaves, his spirit towers amain,
Beyond the senses and their little reign.

And oft, when that dread vision hath past by,
He holds with God himself communion high,
There where the peal of swelling torrents fills
The sky-roofed temple of the eternal hills ;
Or, when upon the mountain's silent brow
Reclined, he sees, above him and below,
Bright stars of ice and azure fields of snow ;
While needle peaks of granite shooting bare
Tremble in ever-varying tints of air.
And when a gathering weight of shadows brown
Falls on the valleys as the sun goes down ;
And Pikes, of darkness named and fear and storms,*
Uplift in quiet their illumined forms,
In sea-like reach of prospect round him spread,
Tinged like an angel's smile all rosy red, —

Scattered over the valley are to be found eleven stones, with this inscription, 1388, the year the battle was fought, marking out, as I was told upon the spot, the several places where the Austrians, attempting to make a stand, were repulsed anew.

* As Schreck-Horn, the pike of terror; Wetter-Horn, the pike of storms, &c., &c.

Awe in his breast with holiest love unites,
And the near heavens impart their own delights.

When downward to his winter hut he goes,
Dear and more dear the lessening circle grows ;
That hut which on the hill so oft employs
His thoughts, the central point of all his joys.
And as a swallow, at the hour of rest,
Peeps often ere she darts into her nest,
So to the homestead, where the grandsire tends
A little prattling child, he oft descends,
To glance a look upon the well-matched pair ;
Till storm and driving ice blockade him there.
There, safely guarded by the woods behind,
He hears the chiding of the baffled wind,
Hears Winter calling all his terrors round,
And, blest within himself, he shrinks not from the
 sound.

Through Nature's vale his homely pleasures glide,
Unstained by envy, discontent, and pride ;
The bound of all his vanity, to deck,
With one bright bell, a favorite heifer's neck ;
Well pleased upon some simple annual feast,
Remembered half the year and hoped the rest,
If dairy-produce, from his inner hoard,
Of thrice ten summers dignify the board.
— Alas ! in every clime a flying ray
Is all we have to cheer our wintry way ;
And here the unwilling mind may more than trace

The general sorrows of the human race :
The churlish gales of penury, that blow
Cold as the north-wind o'er a waste of snow,
To them the gentle groups of bliss deny
That on the noonday bank of leisure lie.
Yet more ;—compelled by Powers which only deign
That *solitary* man disturb their reign,
Powers that support an unremitting strife
With all the tender charities of life,
Full oft the father, when his sons have grown
To manhood, seems their title to disown ;
And from his nest amid the storms of heaven
Drives, eagle-like, those sons as he was driven ;
With stern composure watches to the plain —
And never, eagle-like, beholds again !

When long familiar joys are all resigned,
Why does their sad remembrance haunt the
mind ?
Lo ! where through flat Batavia's willowy groves,
Or by the lazy Seine, the exile roves ;
O'er the curled waters Alpine measures swell,
And search the affections to their inmost cell ;
Sweet poison spreads along the listener's veins,
Turning past pleasures into mortal pains ;
Poison, which not a frame of steel can brave,
Bows his young head with sorrow to the grave.*

* The well known effect of the famous air, called in French
Ranz des Vaches, upon the Swiss troops.

Gay lark of hope, thy silent song resume !
Ye flattering eastern lights, once more the hills
illuminate !

Fresh gales and dews of life's delicious morn,
And thou, lost fragrance of the heart, return !
Alas ! the little joy to man allowed,
Fades like the lustre of an evening cloud ;
Or like the beauty in a flower installed,
Whose season was, and cannot be recalled.
Yet, when opprest by sickness, grief, or care,
And taught that pain is pleasure's natural heir,
We still confide in more than we can know ;
Death would be else the favorite friend of woe.

'Mid savage rocks, and seas of snow that shine
Between interminable tracts of pine,
Within a temple stands an awful shrine,
By an uncertain light revealed, that falls
On the mute Image and the troubled walls.
Oh ! give not me that eye of hard disdain
That views, undimmed, Ensiedlen's* wretched fane.
While ghastly faces through the gloom appear,
Abortive joy, and hope that works in fear ;
While prayer contends with silenced agony,
Surely in other thoughts contempt may die.
If the sad grave of human ignorance bear
One flower of hope — oh, pass and leave it there !

* This shrine is resorted to, from a hope of relief, by multitudes, from every corner of the Catholic world, laboring under mental or bodily afflictions.

The tall sun, pausing on an Alpine spire,
Flings o'er the wilderness a stream of fire :
Now meet we other pilgrims ere the day
Close on the remnant of their weary way ;
While they are drawing toward the sacred floor
Where, so they fondly think, the worm shall gnaw
no more.

How gayly murmur and how sweetly taste
The fountains * reared for them amid the waste !
Their thirst they slake : — they wash their toil-
worn feet,

And some with tears of joy each other greet.
Yes, I must see you when ye first behold
Those holy turrets tipped with evening gold,
In that glad moment will for you a sigh
Be heaved, of charitable sympathy ;
In that glad moment when your hands are prest
In mute devotion on the thankful breast !

Last, let us turn to Chamouny, that shields
With rocks and gloomy woods her fertile fields :
Five streams of ice amid her cots descend,
And with wild flowers and blooming orchards
blend ; —

A scene more fair than what the Grecian feigns
Of purple lights and ever-vernal plains ;
Here all the seasons revel hand in hand :

* Rude fountains built and covered with sheds for the accommodation of the pilgrims, in their ascent of the mountain.

'Mid lawns and shades by breezy rivulets fanned,
They sport beneath that mountain's matchless
height

That holds no commerce with the summer night.
From age to age, throughout his lonely bounds
The crash of ruin fitfully resounds ;
Appalling havoc ! but serene his brow,
Where daylight lingers on perpetual snow ;
Glitter the stars above, and all is black below.

What marvel then if many a Wanderer sigh,
While roars the sullen Arve in anger by,
That not for thy reward, unrivall'd Vale !
Waves the ripe harvest in the autumnal gale ;
That thou, the slave of slaves, art doomed to pine
And droop, while no Italian arts are thine,
To soothe or cheer, to soften or refine.

Hail Freedom ! whether it was mine to stray,
With shrill winds whistling round my lonely way,
On the bleak sides of Cumbria's heath-clad moors,
Or where dank sea-weed lashes Scotland's shores ;
To scent the sweets of Piedmont's breathing rose,
And orange gale that o'er Lugano blows ;
Still have I found, where Tyranny prevails,
That virtue languishes and pleasure fails,
While the remotest hamlets blessings share
In thy loved presence known, and only there ;
Heart-blessings,—outward treasures too which the
eye

Of the sun peeping through the clouds can spy,
And every passing breeze will testify.
There, to the porch, belike with jasmine bound
Or woodbine wreaths, a smoother path is wound;
The housewife there a brighter garden sees,
Where hum on busier wing her happy bees;
On infant cheeks there fresher roses blow;
And gray-haired men look up with livelier brow,
To greet the traveller needing food and rest;
Housed for the night, or but a half-hour's guest.

And oh, fair France! though now the traveller
sees

Thy three-striped banner fluctuate on the breeze;
Though martial songs have banished songs of love,
And nightingales desert the village grove,
Scared by the fife and rumbling drum's alarms,
And the short thunder, and the flash of arms,
That cease not till night falls, when far and nigh,
Sole sound, the Sourd* prolongs his mournful cry!
— Yet, hast thou found that Freedom spreads her
power

Beyond the cottage-hearth, the cottage-door:
All nature smiles, and owns beneath her eyes
Her fields peculiar, and peculiar skies.
Yes, as I roamed where Loiret's waters glide
Through rustling aspens heard from side to side,

* An insect so called, which emits a short, melancholy cry,
heard at the close of the summer evenings, on the banks of
the Loire.

When from October clouds a milder light
Fell where the blue flood rippled into white ;
Methought from every cot the watchful bird
Crowed with ear-piercing power till then unheard ;
Each clacking mill, that broke the murmuring
streams,

Rocked the charmed thought in more delightful
dreams ;

Chasing those pleasant dreams, the falling leaf
Awoke a fainter sense of moral grief ;
The measured echo of the distant flail
Wound in more welcome cadence down the vale ;
With more majestic course* the water rolled,
And ripening foliage shone with richer gold.

— But foes are gathering, — Liberty must raise
Red on the hills her beacon's far-seen blaze ;
Must bid the tocsin ring from tower to tower ! —
Nearer and nearer comes the trying hour !

Rejoice, brave Land, though pride's perverted ire
Rouse hell's own aid, and wrap thy fields in fire :
Lo, from the flames a great and glorious birth ;
As if a new-made heaven were hailing a new
earth !

— All cannot be : the promise is too fair
For creatures doomed to breathe terrestrial air :
Yet not for this will sober reason frown
Upon that promise, nor the hope disown ;

* The duties upon many parts of the French rivers were so exorbitant, that the poorer people, deprived of the benefit of water carriage, were obliged to transport their goods by land.

She knows that only from high aims ensue
Rich guerdons, and to them alone are due.

Great God ! by whom the strifes of men are
weighed
In an impartial balance, give thine aid
To the just cause ; and, oh ! do thou preside
Over the mighty stream now spreading wide :
So shall its waters, from the heavens supplied
In copious showers, from earth by wholesome
springs,
Brood o'er the long-parched lands with Nile-like
wings !
And grant that every sceptred child of clay,
Who cries presumptuous, " Here the flood shall
stay,"
May in its progress see thy guiding hand,
And cease the acknowledged purpose to withstand ;
Or, swept in anger from the insulted shore,
Sink with his servile bands, to rise no more !

To-night, my Friend, within this humble cot
Be scorn and fear and hope alike forgot
In timely sleep ; and when, at break of day,
On the tall peaks the glistening sunbeams play,
With a light heart our course we may renew,
The first whose footsteps print the mountain dew.

1791, 1792.

VII.

LINES

LEFT UPON A SEAT IN A YEW-TREE, WHICH STANDS NEAR
THE LAKE OF ESTHWAITE, ON A DESOLATE PART OF THE
SHORE, COMMANDING A BEAUTIFUL PROSPECT.

NAY, Traveller! rest. This lonely Yew-tree stands
Far from all human dwelling: what if here
No sparkling rivulet spread the verdant herb?
What if the bee love not these barren boughs?
Yet, if the wind breathe soft, the curling waves,
That break against the shore, shall lull thy mind
By one soft impulse saved from vacancy.

Who he was
That piled these stones and with the mossy sod
First covered, and here taught this aged Tree
With its dark arms to form a circling bower,
I well remember. — He was one who owned
No common soul. In youth by science nursed,
And led by nature into a wild scene
Of lofty hopes, he to the world went forth
A favored Being, knowing no desire
Which genius did not hallow; 'gainst the taint
Of dissolute tongues, and jealousy, and hate,
And scorn, — against all enemies prepared,
All but neglect. The world, for so it thought,
Owed him no service; wherefore he at once
With indignation turned himself away,

And with the food of pride sustained his soul
In solitude. — Stranger ! these gloomy boughs
Had charms for him ; and here he loved to sit,
His only visitants a straggling sheep,
The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper :
And on these barren rocks, with fern and heath,
And juniper and thistle, sprinkled o'er,
Fixing his downcast eye, he many an hour
A morbid pleasure nourished, tracing here
An emblem of his own unfruitful life :
And, lifting up his head, he then would gaze
On the more distant scene, — how lovely 't is
'Thou seest, — and he would gaze till it became
Far lovelier, that his heart could not sustain
The beauty, still more beauteous ! Nor, that time,
When Nature had subdued him to herself,
Would he forget those Beings to whose minds
Warm from the labors of benevolence
The world, and human life, appeared a scene
Of kindred loveliness : then he would sigh,
Inly disturbed, to think that others felt
What he must never feel : and so, lost Man !
On visionary views would fancy feed,
Till his eye streamed with tears. In this deep vale
He died, — this seat his only monument.

If Thou be one whose heart the holy forms
Of young imagination have kept pure,
Stranger ! henceforth be warned ; and know that
pride,

Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness ; that he who feels contempt
For any living thing, hath faculties
Which he has never used ; that thought with him
Is in its infancy. The man whose eye
Is ever on himself doth look on one,
The least of Nature's works, one who might move
The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
Unlawful, ever. O be wiser, Thou !
Instructed that true knowledge leads to love ;
True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
In lowliness of heart.

1795.

VIII.

GUILT AND SORROW ;
OR,
INCIDENTS UPON SALISBURY PLAIN.

ADVERTISEMENT

PREFIXED TO THE FIRST EDITION OF THIS POEM, PUBLISHED IN 1842.

NOT less than one third of the following poem, though it has from time to time been altered in the expression, was published so far back as the year 1798, under the title of "The Female Vagrant." The extract is of such length that an apology seems.

to be required for reprinting it here: but it was necessary to restore it to its original position, or the rest would have been unintelligible. The whole was written before the close of the year 1794, and I will detail, rather as matter of literary biography than for any other reason, the circumstances under which it was produced.

During the latter part of the summer of 1793, having passed a month in the Isle of Wight, in view of the fleet which was then preparing for sea off Portsmouth at the commencement of the war, I left the place with melancholy forebodings. The American war was still fresh in memory. The struggle which was beginning, and which many thought would be brought to a speedy close by the irresistible arms of Great Britain being added to those of the allies, I was assured in my own mind would be of long continuance, and productive of distress and misery beyond all possible calculation. This conviction was pressed upon me by having been a witness, during a long residence in revolutionary France, of the spirit which prevailed in that country. After leaving the Isle of Wight, I spent two days in wandering on foot over Salisbury Plain, which, though cultivation was then widely spread through parts of it, had upon the whole a still more impressive appearance than it now retains.

The monuments and traces of antiquity, scattered in abundance over that region, led me unavoidably to compare what we know or guess of those remote times with certain aspects of modern society, and with calamities, principally those consequent upon war, to which, more than other classes of men, the poor are subject. In those reflections, joined with particular facts that had come to my knowledge, the following stanzas originated.

In conclusion, to obviate some distraction in the minds of those who are well acquainted with Salisbury Plain, it may be proper to say, that, of the features described as belonging to it, one or two are taken from other desolate parts of England.

I.

A TRAVELLER on the skirt of Sarum's Plain
Pursued his vagrant way, with feet half bare ;
Stooping his gait, but not as if to gain
Help from the staff he bore ; for mien and air
Were hardy, though his cheek seemed worn with
care

Both of the time to come, and time long fled :
Down fell in straggling locks his thin gray hair ;
A coat he wore of military red,
But faded, and stuck o'er with many a patch and
shred.

II.

While thus he journeyed, step by step led on,
He saw and passed a stately inn, full sure
That welcome in such house for him was none.
No board inscribed the needy to allure
Hung there, no bush proclaimed to old and poor
And desolate, " Here you will find a friend !"
The pendent grapes glittered above the door ; —
On he must pace, perchance till night descend,
Where'er the dreary roads their bare white lines
extend.

III.

The gathering clouds grew red with stormy fire,
In streaks diverging wide and mounting high ;
That inn he long had passed ; the distant spire,
Which oft as he looked back had fixed his eye,
Was lost, though still he looked, in the blank sky.
Perplexed and comfortless he gazed around,

And scarce could any trace of man descry,
Save cornfields stretched and stretching without
 bound ;
But where the sower dwelt was nowhere to be found.

IV.

No tree was there, no meadow's pleasant green,
No brook to wet his lip or soothe his ear ;
Long files of corn-stacks here and there were seen,
But not one dwelling-place his heart to cheer.
Some laborer, thought he, may perchance be near ;
And so he sent a feeble shout — in vain ;
No voice made answer, he could only hear
Winds rustling over plots of unripe grain,
Or whistling thro' thin grass along the unfurrowed
 plain.

V.

Long had he fancied each successive slope
Concealed some cottage, whither he might turn
And rest ; but now along heaven's darkening cope
The crows rushed by in eddies, homeward borne.
Thus warned he sought some shepherd's spreading
 thorn

Or hovel from the storm to shield his head,
But sought in vain ; for now, all wild, forlorn,
And vacant, a huge waste around him spread ;
The wet, cold ground, he feared, must be his only
 bed.

VI.

And be it so, — for to the chill night shower
And the sharp wind his head he oft hath bared ;

A Sailor he, who many a wretched hour
Hath told ; for, landing after labor hard,
Full long endured in hope of just reward,
He to an armèd fleet was forced away
By seamen, who perhaps themselves had shared
Like fate ; was hurried off, a helpless prey,
'Gainst all that in *his* heart, or theirs perhaps,
said nay.

VII.

For years the work of carnage did not cease,
And death's dire aspect daily he surveyed,
Death's minister ; then came his glad release,
And hope returned, and Pleasure fondly made
Her dwelling in his dreams. By Fancy's aid
The happy husband flies, his arms to throw
Round his wife's neck ; the prize of victory laid
In her full lap, he sees such sweet tears flow
As if thenceforth nor pain nor trouble she could
know.

VIII.

Vain hope ! for fraud took all that he had earned.
The lion roars and gluts his tawny brood
Even in the desert's heart ; but he, returned,
Bears not those he loves their needful food.
His home approaching, but in such a mood
'That from his sight his children might have run,
He met a traveller, robbed him, shed his blood ;
And when the miserable work was done
He fled, a vagrant since, the murderer's fate to
shun.

IX.

From that day forth no place to him could be
So lonely, but that thence might come a pang
Brought from without to inward misery.
Now, as he plodded on, with sullen clang
A sound of chains along the desert rang ;
He looked, and saw upon a gibbet high
A human body that in irons swang,
Uplifted by the tempest whirling by ;
And, hovering, round it often did a raven fly.

X.

It was a spectacle which none might view,
In spot so savage, but with shuddering pain ;
Nor only did for him at once renew
All he had feared from man, but roused a train
Of the mind's phantoms, horrible as vain.
The stones, as if to cover him from day,
Rolled at his back along the living plain ;
He fell, and without sense or motion lay ;
But, when the trance was gone, feebly pursued
his way.

XI.

As one whose brain habitual frenzy fires
Owes to the fit in which his soul hath tossed
Profounder quiet, when the fit retires,
Even so the dire phantasma which had crossed
His sense, in sudden vacancy quite lost,
Left his mind still as a deep evening stream.
Nor, if accosted now, in thought engrossed,
Moody, or inly troubled, would he seem
To traveller who might talk of any casual theme.

XII.

Hurtle the clouds in deeper darkness piled,
Gone is the raven timely rest to seek ;
He seemed the only creature in the wild .
On whom the elements their rage might wreak ;
Save that the bustard, of those regions bleak
Shy tenant, seeing by the uncertain light
A man there wandering, gave a mournful shriek,
And half upon the ground, with strange affright,
Forced hard against the wind a thick unwieldy
flight.

XIII.

All, all was cheerless to the horizon's bound ;
The weary eye — which, wheresoe'er it strays,
Marks nothing but the red sun's setting round,
Or on the earth strange lines, in former days
Left by gigantic arms — at length surveys
What seems an antique castle spreading wide ;
Hoary and naked are its walls, and raise
Their brow sublime : in shelter there to bide
He turned, while rain poured down smoking on
every side.

XIV.

Pile of Stonehenge ! so proud to hint yet keep
Thy secrets, thou that lov'st to stand and hear
The Plain resounding to the whirlwind's sweep,
Inmate of lonesome Nature's endless year ;
Even if thou saw'st the giant wicker rear
For sacrifice its throngs of living men,
Before thy face did never wretch appear,

Who in his heart had groaned with deadlier pain
Than he who, tempest-driven, thy shelter now
would gain.

xv.

Within that fabric of mysterious form,
Winds met in conflict, each by turns supreme ;
And, from the perilous ground dislodged, through
storm

And rain he wildered on, no moon to stream
From gulf of parting clouds one friendly beam,
Nor any friendly sound his footsteps led ;
Once did the lightning's faint, disastrous gleam
Disclose a naked guide-post's double head,
Sight which though lost at once a gleam of pleas-
ure shed.

xvi.

No swinging sign-board creaked from cottage elm
To stay his steps with faintness overcome ;
'T was dark and void as ocean's watery realm,
Roaring with storms beneath night's starless gloom ;
No Gypsy cower'd o'er fire of furze or broom ;
No laborer watched his red kiln glaring bright,
Nor taper glimmered dim from sick man's room ;
Along the waste no line of mournful light
From lamp of lonely toll-gate streamed athwart
the night.

xvii.

At length, though hid in clouds, the moon arose ;
The downs were visible — and now revealed
A structure stands, which two bare slopes inclose.

It was a spot, where, ancient vows fulfilled,
Kind, pious hands did to the Virgin build
A lonely Spital, the belated swain
From the night terrors of that waste to shield:
But there no human being could remain,
And now the walls are named the "Dead House"
of the plain.

XVIII.

Though he had little cause to love the abode
Of man, or covet sight of mortal face,
Yet when faint beams of light that ruin showed,
How glad he was at length to find some trace
Of human shelter in that dreary place.
Till to his flock the early shepherd goes,
Here shall much-needed sleep his frame embrace.
In a dry nook where fern the floor bestrows
He lays his stiffened limbs, — his eyes begin to
close ;

XIX.

When, hearing a deep sigh, that seemed to come
From one who mourned in sleep, he raised his
head,
And saw a woman in the naked room
Outstretched, and turning on a restless bed :
The moon a wan dead light around her shed.
He waked her, — spake in tone that would not fail,
He hoped, to calm her mind ; but ill he sped,
For of that ruin she had heard a tale
Which now with freezing thoughts did all her
powers assail ;

XX.

Had heard of one who, forced from storms to shroud,
Felt the loose walls of this decayed Retreat
Rock to incessant neighings shrill and loud,
While his horse pawed the floor with furious heat;
Till on a stone, that sparkled to his feet,
Struck, and still struck again, the troubled horse :
The man half raised the stone with pain and sweat,
Half raised, for well his arm might lose its force,
Disclosing the grim head of a late murdered corse.

XXI.

Such tale of this lone mansion she had learned,
And when that shape, with eyes in sleep half
drowned,
By the moon's sullen lamp she first discerned,
Cold stony horror all her senses bound.
Her he addressed in words of cheering sound ;
Recovering heart, like answer did she make ;
And well it was that, of the corse there found,
In converse that ensued she nothing spake ;
She knew not what dire pangs in him such tale
could wake.

XXII.

But soon his voice and words of kind intent
Banished that dismal thought ; and now the wind
In fainter howlings told its *rage* was spent.
Meanwhile discourse ensued of various kind,
Which by degrees a confidence of mind
And mutual interest failed not to create.
And, to a natural sympathy resigned,

In that forsaken building where they sate
The Woman thus retraced her own untoward fate.

XXIII.

“ By Derwent’s side my father dwelt, — a man
Of virtuous life, by pious parents bred ;
And I believe that, soon as I began
To lisp, he made me kneel beside my bed,
And in his hearing there my prayers I said :
And afterwards, by my good father taught,
I read, and loved the books in which I read ;
For books in every neighboring house I sought,
And nothing to my mind a sweeter pleasure brought.

XXIV.

A little croft we owned, — a plot of corn,
A garden stored with peas, and mint, and thyme,
And flowers for posies, oft on Sunday morn
Plucked while the church bells rang their earliest
chime.

Can I forget our freaks at shearing-time !
My hen’s rich nest through long grass scarce espied ;
The cowslip-gathering in June’s dewy prime ;
The swans that with white chests upreared in pride
Rushing and racing came to meet me at the water-
side !

XXV.

The staff I well remember which upbore
The bending body of my active sire ;
His seat beneath the honeyed sycamore
Where the bees hummed, and chair by winter fire ;
When market-morning came, the neat attire

With which, though bent on haste, myself I decked ;
Our watchful house-dog, that would tease and tire
The stranger till its barking-fit I checked ;
The red-breast, known for years, which at my case-
ment pecked.

XXVI.

The suns of twenty summers danced along, —
Too little marked how fast they rolled away :
But, through severe mischance and cruel wrong,
My father's substance fell into decay :
We toiled and struggled, hoping for a day
When Fortune might put on a kinder look ;
But vain were wishes, efforts vain as they ;
He from his old hereditary nook
Must part ; the summons came ; — our final leave
we took.

XXVII.

It was indeed a miserable hour
When, from the last hill-top, my sire surveyed,
Peering above the trees, the steeple tower
That on his marriage day sweet music made !
Till then, he hoped his bones might there be laid
Close by my mother in their native bowers :
Bidding me trust in God, he stood and prayed ; —
I could not pray : through tears that fell in showers
Glimmered our dear-loved home, alas ! no longer ours !

XXVIII.

There was a Youth whom I had loved so long,
That when I loved him not I cannot say ;
'Mid the green mountains many a thoughtless song

We two had sung, like gladsome birds in May ;
When we began to tire of childish play,
We seemed still more and more to prize each other ;
We talked of marriage and our marriage day ;
And I in truth did love him like a brother,
For never could I hope to meet with such another.

XXIX.

Two years were passed since to a distant town
He had repaired to ply a gainful trade :
What tears of bitter grief, till then unknown !
What tender vows our last sad kiss delayed !
To him we turned : — we had no other aid :
Like one revived, upon his neck I wept ;
And her whom he had loved in joy, he said,
He well could love in grief ; his faith he kept ;
And in a quiet home once more my father slept.

XXX.

We lived in peace and comfort ; and were blest
With daily bread, by constant toil supplied.
Three lovely babes had lain upon my breast ;
And often, viewing their sweet smiles, I sighed,
And knew not why. My happy father died,
When threatened war reduced the children's meal :
Thrice happy ! that for him the grave could hide
The empty loom, cold hearth, and silent wheel,
And tears that flowed for ills which patience
might not heal.

XXXI.

'T was a hard change ; an evil time was come ;
We had no hope, and no relief could gain :

But soon, with proud parade, the noisy drum
Beat round to clear the streets of want and pain.
My husband's arms now only served to strain
Me and his children hungering in his view ;
In such dismay my prayers and tears were vain :
To join those miserable men he flew,
And now to the sea-coast, with numbers more, we
drew.

XXXII.

There were we long neglected, and we bore
Much sorrow ere the fleet its anchor weighed.
Green fields before us, and our native shore,
We breathed a pestilential air, that made
Ravage for which no knell was heard. We prayed
For our departure ; wished and wished,—norknew,
'Mid that long sickness and those hopes delayed,
That happier days we never more must view.
The parting signal streamed,—at last the land
withdrew.

XXXIII.

But the calm summer season now was past.
On as we drove, the equinoctial deep
Ran mountains high before the howling blast,
And many perished in the whirlwind's sweep.
We gazed with terror on their gloomy sleep,
Untaught that soon such anguish must ensue,
Our hopes such harvest of affliction reap,
That we the mercy of the waves should rue :
We reached the western world, a poor devoted
crew.

XXXIV.

The pains and plagues that on our heads came down,
Disease and famine, agony and fear,
In wood or wilderness, in camp or town,
It would unman the firmest heart to hear.
All perished, — all in one remorseless year, —
Husband and children ! one by one, by sword
And ravenous plague, all perished : every tear
Dried up, despairing, desolate, on board
A British ship I waked, as from a trance restored."

XXXV.

Here paused she, of all present thought forlorn,
Nor voice, nor sound, that moment's pain expressed,
Yet Nature, with excess of grief o'erborne,
From her full eyes their watery load released.
He too was mute : and, ere her weeping ceased,
He rose, and to the ruin's portal went,
And saw the dawn opening the silvery east
With rays of promise, north and southward sent ;
And soon with crimson fire kindled the firmament.

XXXVI.

" O come," he cried, " come, after weary night
Of such rough storm, this happy change to view."
So forth she came, and eastward looked ; the sight
Over her brow like dawn of gladness threw ;
Upon her cheek, to which its youthful hue
Seemed to return, dried the last lingering tear,
And from her grateful heart a fresh one drew :
The whilst her comrade to her pensive cheer
Tempered fit words of hope ; and the lark warbled
near.

XXXVII.

They looked and saw a lengthening road, and
wain
That rang down a bare slope not far remote :
The barrows glistened bright with drops of rain,
Whistled the wagoner with merry note,
The cock far off sounded his clarion throat ;
But town, or farm, or hamlet, none they viewed,
Only were told there stood a lonely cot
A long mile thence. While thither they pursued
Their way, the woman thus her mournful tale
renewed.

XXXVIII.

“ Peaceful as this immeasurable plain
Is now, by beams of dawning light imprest,
In the calm sunshine slept the glittering main ;
The very ocean hath its hour of rest.
I too forgot the heavings of my breast.
How quiet 'round me ship and ocean were !
As quiet all within me. I was blest,
And looked, and fed upon the silent air
Until it seemed to bring a joy to my despair.

XXXIX.

Ah ! how unlike those late terrific sleeps,
● And groans that rage of racking famine spoke ;
The unburied dead that lay in festering heaps,
The breathing pestilence that rose like smoke,
The shriek that from the distant battle broke,
The mine's dire earthquake, and the pallid host,
Driven by the bomb's incessant thunder-stroke

To loathsome vaults, where heart-sick anguish
tossed,

Hope died, and fear itself in agony was lost !

XL.

Some mighty gulf of separation passed,
I seemed transported to another world ;
A thought resigned with pain, when from the mast
The impatient mariner the sail unfurled,
And, whistling, called the wind that hardly curled
The silent sea. From the sweet thoughts of home
And from all hope I was for ever hurled.
For me, farthest from earthly port to roam
Was best, could I but shun the spot where man
might come.

XLI.

And oft I thought (my fancy was so strong)
That I, at last, a resting-place had found ;
'Here will I dwell,' said I, 'my whole life long,
Roaming the illimitable waters round ;
Here will I live, of all but Heaven disowned,
And end my days upon the peaceful flood.'
To break my dream, the vessel reached its bound ;
And homeless near a thousand homes I stood,
And near a thousand tables pined and wanted food.

XLII.

No help I sought ; in sorrow turned adrift,
Was hopeless, as if cast on some bare rock ;
Nor morsel to my mouth that day did lift,
Nor raised my hand at any door to knock.
I lay where, with his drowsy mates, the cock

From the cross-timber of an out-house hung :
Dismally tolled, that night, the city clock !
At morn my sick heart hunger scarcely stung,
Nor to the beggar's language could I fit my tongue.

XLIII.

So passed a second day ; and, when the third
Was come, I tried in vain the crowd's resort.
— In deep despair, by frightful wishes stirred,
Near the sea-side I reached a ruined fort ;
There, pains which nature could no more support,
With blindness linked, did on my vitals fall ;
And, after many interruptions short
Of hideous sense, I sank, nor step could crawl :
Unsought for was the help that did my life recall.

XLIV.

Borne to a hospital, I lay with brain
Drowsy and weak, with shattered memory ;
I heard my neighbors in their beds complain
Of many things which never troubled me, —
Of feet still bustling round with busy glee,
Of looks where common kindness had no part,
Of service done with cold formality,
Fretting the fever round the languid heart,
And groans which, as they said, might make a
dead man start.

XLV.

These things just served to stir the slumbering sense,
Nor pain nor pity in my bosom raised.
With strength did memory return ; and, thence
Dismissed, again on open day I gazed,

At houses, men, and common light amazed.
The lanes I sought, and, as the sun retired,
Came where beneath the trees a fagot blazed ;
The travellers saw me weep, my fate inquired,
And gave me food — and rest, more welcome, more
desired.

XLVI.

Rough potters seemed they, trading soberly
With panniered asses driven from door to door ;
But life of happier sort set forth to me,
And other joys my fancy to allure, —
The bagpipe dinning on the midnight moor
In barn uplighted ; and companions boon,
Well met from far with revelry secure
Among the forest glades, while jocund June
Rolled fast along the sky his warm and genial moon.

XLVII.

But ill they suited me, — those journeys dark
O'er moor and mountain, midnight theft to hatch !
To charm the surly house-dog's faithful bark,
Or hang on tiptoe at the lifted latch.
The gloomy lantern, and the dim blue match,
The black disguise, the warning whistle shrill,
And ear still busy on its nightly watch,
Were not for me, brought up in nothing ill :
Besides, on griefs so fresh my thoughts were brood-
ing still.

XLVIII.

What could I do, unaided and unblest ?
My father ! gone was every friend of thine :

And kindred of dead husband are at best
Small help ; and, after marriage such as mine,
With little kindness would to me incline.
Nor was I then for toil or service fit ;
My deep-drawn sighs no effort could confine ;
In open air forgetful would I sit
Whole hours, with idle arms in moping sorrow
knit.

XLIX.

The roads I paced, I loitered through the fields ;
Contentedly, yet sometimes self-accused,
Trusted my life to what chance bounty yields,
Now coldly given, now utterly refused.
The ground I for my bed have often used :
But what afflicts my peace with keenest ruth
Is that I have my inner self abused,
Foregone the home delight of constant truth,
And clear and open soul, so prized in fearless
youth.

L.

Through tears the rising sun I oft have viewed,
Through tears have seen him towards that world
descend
Where my poor heart lost all its fortitude :
Three years a wanderer, now my course I bend—
Oh ! tell me whither — for no earthly friend
Have I.” — She ceased, and weeping turned away
As if because her tale was at an end,
She wept ; because she had no more to say
Of that perpetual weight which on her spirit lay.

LI.

True sympathy the Sailor's looks expressed,
His looks, — for pondering he was mute the while.
Of social Order's care for wretchedness,
Of Time's sure help to calm and reconcile,
Joy's second spring and Hope's long-treasured
smile,

'T was not for *him* to speak, — a man so tried.
Yet, to relieve her heart, in friendly style
Proverbial words of comfort he applied,
And not in vain, while they went pacing side by
side.

LII.

Ere long, from heaps of turf, before their sight,
Together smoking in the sun's slant beam,
Rise various wreaths, that into one unite,
Which high and higher mounts with silver gleam;
Fair spectacle! — but instantly a scream
Thence bursting shrill did all remark prevent;
They paused, and heard a hoarser voice blaspheme,
And female cries. Their course they thither bent,
And met a man who foamed with anger vehement.

LIII.

A woman stood with quivering lips and pale,
And, pointing to a little child that lay
Stretched on the ground, began a piteous tale;
How in a simple freak of thoughtless play
He had provoked his father, who straightway,
As if each blow were deadlier than the last,
Struck the poor innocent. Pallid with dismay

The Soldier's Widow heard and stood aghast ;
And stern looks on the man her gray-haired Com-
rade cast.

LIV.

His voice with indignation rising high
Such further deed in manhood's name forbade ;
The peasant, wild in passion, made reply
With bitter insult and revilings sad ;
Asked him in scorn what business there he had ;
What kind of plunder he was hunting now ;
The gallows would one day of him be glad ; —
Though inward anguish damped the Sailor's brow,
Yet calm he seemed as thoughts so poignant would
allow.

LV.

Softly he stroked the child, who lay outstretched
With face to earth ; and, as the boy turned round
His battered head, a groan the Sailor fetched,
As if he saw — there and upon that ground —
Strange repetition of the deadly wound
He had himself inflicted. Through his brain
At once the griding iron passage found ;
Deluge of tender thoughts then rushed amain,
Nor could his sunken eyes the starting tear restrain.

LVI.

Within himself he said, What hearts have we !
The blessing this a father gives his child !
Yet happy thou, poor boy ! compared with me,
Suffering, not doing, ill, — fate far more mild.
The stranger's looks and tears of wrath beguiled

The father, and relenting thoughts awoke ;
He kissed his son : — so all was reconciled.
Then, with a voice which inward trouble broke
Ere to his lips it came, the Sailor them bespoke.

LVII.

“ Bad is the world, and hard is the world’s law,
Even for the man who wears the warmest fleece
Much need have ye that time more closely draw
The bond of nature, all unkindness cease,
And that among so few there still be peace :
Else can ye hope but with such numerous foes
Your pains shall ever with your years increase ? ” —
While from his heart the appropriate lesson flows,
A correspondent calm stole gently o’er his woes.

LVIII.

Forthwith the pair passed on ; and down they look
Into a narrow valley’s pleasant scene
Where wreaths of vapor tracked a winding brook,
That babbled on through groves and meadows
green ;
A low-roofed house peeped out the trees between ;
The dripping groves resound with cheerful lays,
And melancholy lowings intervene
Of scattered herds, that in the meadow graze,
Some amid lingering shade, some touched by the
sun’s rays.

LIX.

They saw and heard, and, winding with the road
Down a thick wood, they dropt into the vale ;
Comfort by prouder mansions unbestowed

Their wearied frames, she hoped, would soon regale.

Ere long they reached that cottage in the dale :
It was a rustic inn ; — the board was spread,
'The milkmaid followed with her brimming pail,
And lustily the master carved the bread,
Kindly the housewife pressed, and they in comfort fed.

LX.

Their breakfast done, the pair, though loth, must part ;

Wanderers whose course no longer now agrees.
She rose and bade farewell ! and, while her heart
Struggled with tears, nor could its sorrow ease,
She left him there ; for, clustering round his knees,
With his oak-staff the cottage children played ;
And soon she reached a spot o'erhung with trees
And banks of ragged earth ; beneath the shade,
Across the pebbly road, a little runnel strayed.

LXI.

A cart and horse beside the rivulet stood ;
Checkering the canvas roof the sunbeams shone.
She saw the carman bend to scoop the flood
As the wain fronted her, — wherein lay one,
A pale-faced Woman, in disease far gone.
'The carman wet her lips as well behaved ;
Bed under her lean body there was none,
Though even to die near one she most had loved
She could not of herself those wasted limbs have moved.

LXII.

The Soldier's Widow learned with honest pain,
And homefelt force of sympathy sincere,
Why thus that worn-out wretch must there sustain

The jolting road and morning air severe.
The wain pursued its way ; and following near,
In pure compassion, she her steps retraced
Far as the cottage. "A sad sight is here,"
She cried aloud ; and forth ran out in haste
The friends whom she had left but a few minutes
past.

LXIII.

While to the door with eager speed they ran,
From her bare straw the Woman half upraised
Her bony visage, gaunt and deadly wan ;
No pity asking, on the group she gazed
With a dim eye, distracted and amazed ;
Then sank upon her straw with feeble moan.
Fervently cried the housewife, "God be praised,
I have a house that I can call my own ;
Nor shall she perish there, untended and alone !"

LXIV.

So in they bear her to the chimney seat,
And busily, though yet with fear, untie
Her garments, and, to warm her icy feet
And chafe her temples, careful hands apply.
Nature reviving, with a deep-drawn sigh
She strove, and not in vain, her head to rear ;
Then said, "I thank you all ; if I must die,

The God in heaven my prayers for you will hear;
Till now I did not think my end had been so near.

LXV.

“Barred every comfort labor could procure,
Suffering what no endurance could assuage,
I was compelled to seek my father’s door,
Though loth to be a burden on his age.
But sickness stopped me in an early stage
Of my sad journey ; and within the wain
They placed me, — there to end life’s pilgrimage,
Unless beneath your roof I may remain :
For I shall never see my father’s door again.

LXVI.

“My life, Heaven knows, hath long been burden-
some ;
But, if I have not meekly suffered, meek
May my end be ! Soon will this voice be dumb :
Should child of mine e’er wander hither, speak
Of me, say that the worm is on my cheek. —
Torn from our hut, that stood beside the sea
Near Portland lighthouse in a lonesome creek,
My husband served in sad captivity
On shipboard, bound till peace or death should set
him free.

LXVII.

“A sailor’s wife, I knew a widow’s cares,
Yet two sweet little ones partook my bed ;
Hope cheered my dreams, and to my daily prayers
Our Heavenly Father granted each day’s bread ;
Till one was found by stroke of violence dead,

Whose body near our cottage chanced to lie ;
A dire suspicion drove us from our shed ;
In vain to find a friendly face we try,
Nor could we live together those poor boys and I ;

LXVIII.

“ For evil tongues made oath how on that day
My husband lurked about the neighborhood ;
Now he had fled, and whither none could say,
And *he* had done the deed in the dark wood —
Near his own home ! — but he was mild and good ;
Never on earth was gentler creature seen ;
He 'd not have robbed the raven of its food.
My husband's lovingkindness stood between
Me and all worldly harms and wrongs however
keen.”

LXIX.

Alas ! the thing she told with laboring breath
The Sailor knew too well. That wickedness
His hand had wrought ; and when, in the hour of
death,
He saw his Wife's lips move his name to bless
With her last words, unable to suppress
His anguish, with his heart he ceased to strive ;
And, weeping loud in this extreme distress,
He cried, “ Do pity me ! That thou shouldst live
I neither ask nor wish ; forgive me, but forgive ! ”

LXX.

To tell the change that Voice within her wrought
Nature by sign or sound made no essay ;
A sudden joy surprised expiring thought,

And every mortal pang dissolved away.
Borne gently to a bed, in death she lay ;
Yet still, while over her the husband bent,
A look was in her face which seemed to say,
“ Be blest : by sight of thee from heaven was sent
Peace to my parting soul, the fulness of content.”

LXXI.

She slept in peace, — his pulses throbbed and
stopped ;

Breathless he gazed upon her face, — then took
Her hand in his, and raised it, but both dropped
When on his own he cast a rueful look.

His ears were never silent ; sleep forsook
His burning eyelids, stretched and stiff as lead ;
All night from time to time under him shook
The floor, as he lay shuddering on his bed ;
And oft he groaned aloud, “ O God, that I were
dead ! ”

LXXII.

The Soldier's Widow lingered in the cot ;
And, when he rose, he thanked her pious care,
Through which his Wife, to that kind shelter
brought,

Died in his arms ; and with those thanks a prayer
He breathed for her, and for that merciful pair.

The corse interred, not one hour he remained
Beneath their roof, but to the open air
A burden, now with fortitude sustained,
He bore within a breast where dreadful quiet
reigned.

LXXIII.

Confirmed of purpose, fearlessly prepared
For act and suffering, to the city straight
He journeyed, and forthwith his crime declared :
“ And from your doom,” he added, “ now I wait,
Nor let it linger long, the murderer’s fate.”
Not ineffectual was that piteous claim :
“ O welcome sentence which will end, though late,”
He said, “ the pangs that to my conscience came
Out of that deed. My trust, Saviour ! is in thy
name ! ”

LXXIV.

His fate was pitied. Him in iron case
(Reader, forgive the intolerable thought)
They hung not : — no one on *his* form or face
Could gaze, as on a show by idlers sought ;
No kindred sufferer, to his death-place brought
By lawless curiosity or chance,
When into storms the evening sky is wrought,
Upon his swinging corse an eye can glance,
And drop, as he once dropped, in miserable trance.

THE BORDERERS.

A TRAGEDY.

(COMPOSED 1795-6.)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MARMADUKE.	} Of the Band of Borderers.	Host.
OSWALD.		Forester.
WALLACE.		ELDRED, a Peasant.
LACY.		Peasant, Pilgrims, &c.
LENNOX.		
HERBERT.		IDONEA.
WILFRED, Servant to MARMA- DUKE.		Female Beggar.
		ELEANOR, Wife to ELDERED.

SCENE, *Borders of England and Scotland.*TIME, *the Reign of Henry III.*

READERS already acquainted with my Poems will recognize, in the following composition, some eight or ten lines, which I have not scrupled to retain in the places where they originally stood. It is proper, however, to add, that they would not have been used elsewhere, if I had foreseen the time when I might be induced to publish this Tragedy.

February 28, 1842.

ACT I.

SCENE, *road in a wood.*

WALLACE and LACY.

Lacy. The Troop will be impatient ; let us hie
Back to our post, and strip the Scottish Foray
Of their rich spoil, ere they recross the Border.

—Pity that our young Chief will have no part
In this good service.

Wal. Rather let us grieve
That, in the undertaking which has caused
His absence, he hath sought, whate'er his aim,
Companionship with one of crooked ways,
From whose perverted soul can come no good
To our confiding, open-hearted Leader.

Lacy. True; and, remembering how the Band
have proved
That Oswald finds small favor in our sight,
Well may we wonder he has gained such power
Over our much-loved Captain.

Wal. I have heard
Of some dark deed to which in early life
His passion drove him, — then a voyager
Upon the midland Sea. You knew his bearing
In Palestine?

Lacy. Where he despised alike
Mohammedan and Christian. - But enough ;
Let us begone,— the Band may else be foiled.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter MARMADUKE *and* WILFRED.

Wil. Be cautious, my dear Master !

Mar. I perceive
That fear is like a cloak which old men huddle
About their love, as if to keep it warm.

Wil. Nay, but I grieve that we should part.
This stranger,
For such he is —

Mar. Your busy fancies, Wilfred,
Might tempt me to a smile ; but what of him ?

Wil. You know that you have saved his life.

Mar. I know it.

Wil. And that he hates you ! — Pardon me,
perhaps

That word was hasty.

Mar. Fy ! no more of it.

Wil. Dear Master ! gratitude's a heavy burden
To a proud soul. — Nobody loves this Oswald, —
Yourself, you do not love him.

Mar. I do more,
I honor him. Strong feelings to his heart
Are natural ; and from no one can be learnt
More of man's thoughts and ways than his expe-
rience

Has given him power to teach : and then for courage
And enterprise, — what perils hath he shunned ?
What obstacles hath he failed to overcome ?
Answer these questions, from our common knowl-
edge,

And be at rest.

Wil. Oh, Sir !

Mar. Peace, my good Wilfred ;
Repair to Liddesdale, and tell the Band
I shall be with them in two days, at farthest.

Wil. May He whose eye is over all protect you.
[*Exit.*

Enter OSWALD (a bunch of plants in his hand.)

Osw. This wood is rich in plants—and curious
simples.

Mar. (*looking at them.*) The wild rose, and the poppy, and the nightshade :
Which is your favorite, Oswald?

Osw. That which, while it is Strong to destroy, is also strong to heal. —

[*Looking forward.*
Not yet in sight ! — We 'll saunter here awhile ;
They cannot mount the hill, by us unseen.

Mar. (*a letter in his hand.*) It is no common thing when one like you Performs these delicate services, and therefore I feel myself much bounden to you, Oswald ;
'T is a strange letter this ! — You saw her write it ?

Osw. And saw the tears with which she blotted it.

Mar. And nothing less would satisfy him ?

Osw. No less ;
For that another in his Child's affection Should hold a place, as if 't were robbery,
He seemed to quarrel with the very thought.
Besides, I know not what strange prejudice Is rooted in his mind ; this Band of ours,
Which you 've collected for the noblest ends,
Along the confines of the Esk and Tweed
To guard the Innocent, — he calls us "Outlaws" ;
And, for yourself, in plain terms he asserts
This garb was taken up that indolence
Might want no cover, and rapacity
Be better fed.

Mar. Ne'er may I own the heart
That cannot feel for one, helpless as he is.

Osw. Thou know'st me for a man not easily
moved,

Yet was I grievously provoked to think
Of what I witnessed.

Mar. This day will suffice
To end her wrongs.

Osw. But if the blind man's tale
Should yet be true?

Mar. Would it were possible !
Did not the Soldier tell thee that himself,
And others who survived the wreck, beheld
The Baron Herbert perish in the waves
Upon the coast of Cyprus?

Osw. Yes, even so,
And I had heard the like before : in sooth,
The tale of this his quondam Barony
Is cunningly devised ; and, on the back
Of his forlorn appearance, could not fail
To make the proud and vain his tributaries,
And stir the pulse of lazy charity.
The seignories of Herbert are in Devon ;
We, neighbors of the Esk and Tweed : 't is much
The Arch-impostor ——

Mar. Treat him gently, Oswald ;
Though I have never seen his face, methinks,
There cannot come a day when I shall cease
To love him. I remember, when a boy
Of scarcely seven years' growth, beneath the Elm
That casts its shade over our village school,
'T was my delight to sit and hear Idonea

Repeat her Father's terrible adventures,
Till all the band of playmates wept together ;
And that was the beginning of my love.
And, through all converse of our later years,
An image of this old man still was present,
When I had been most happy. Pardon me
If this be idly spoken.

Osw. See, they come,
Two travellers !

Mar. (points.) The woman is Idonea.

Osw. And leading Herbert.

Mar. We must let them pass, —
This thicket will conceal us. [*They step aside.*

Enter IDONEA, leading HERBERT, blind.

Idon. Dear Father, you sigh deeply ; ever since
We left the willow shade by the brook-side,
Your natural breathing has been troubled.

Her. *Nay,*
You are too fearful; yet must I confess,
Our march of yesterday had better suited
A firmer step than mine.

Idon. That dismal Moor,—
In spite of all the larks that cheered our path,
I never can forgive it : but how steadily
You paced along, when the bewildering moonlight
Mocked me with many a strange fantastic shape! —
I thought the Convent never would appear ;
It seemed to move away from us : and yet,
That you are thus, the fault is mine ; for the air

Was soft and warm, no dew lay on the grass,
And midway on the waste ere night had fallen
I spied a Covert walled and roofed with sods, —
A miniature ; belike some Shepherd-boy,
Who might have found a nothing-doing hour
Heavier than work, raised it : within that hut
We might have made a kindly bed of heath,
And thankfully there rested side by side
Wrapped in our cloaks, and, with recruited strength,
Have hailed the morning sun. But cheerily, Fa-
ther, —

That staff of yours, I could almost have heart
To fling't away from you : you make no use
Of me, or of my strength ; — come, let me feel
That you do press upon me. There, — indeed
You are quite exhausted. Let us rest awhile
On this green bank. [*He sits down.*

Her. (after some time.) Idonea, you are silent.
And I divine the cause.

Idon. Do not reproach me :
I pondered patiently your wish and will
When I gave way to your request ; and now,
When I behold the ruins of that face,
Those eyeballs dark, — dark beyond hope of light,
And think that they were blasted for my sake,
The name of Marmaduke is blown away :
Father, I would not change that sacred feeling
For all this world can give.

Her. Nay, be composed :
Few minutes gone, a faintness overspread

My frame, and I bethought me of two things
I ne'er had heart to separate, — my grave,
And thee, my Child !

Idon. Believe me, honored Sire !
"T is weariness that breeds these gloomy fancies,
And you mistake the cause : you hear the woods
Resound with music, could you see the sun,
And look upon the pleasant face of Nature——

Her. I comprehend thee — I should be as cheerful
As if we two were twins ; two songsters bred
In the same nest, my spring-time one with thine.
My fancies, fancies if they be, are such
As come, dear Child ! from a far deeper source
Than bodily weariness. While here we sit
I feel my strength returning. — The bequest
Of thy kind patroness, which to receive
We have thus far adventured, will suffice
To save thee from the extreme of penury ;
But when thy Father must lie down and die,
How wilt thou stand alone ?

Idon. Is he not strong ?
Is he not valiant ?

Her. Am I then so soon
Forgotten ? have my warnings passed so quickly
Out of thy mind ? My dear, my only Child ;
Thou wouldst be leaning on a broken reed, —
This Marmaduke ——

Idon. O could you hear his voice :
Alas ! you do not know him. He is one
(I wot not what ill tongue has wronged him with
you)

All gentleness and love. His face bespeaks
A deep and simple meekness : and that soul,
Which with the motion of a virtuous act
Flashes a look of terror upon guilt,
Is, after conflict, quiet as the ocean,
By a miraculous finger stilled at once.

Her. Unhappy Woman !

Idon.

Nay, it was my duty

Thus much to speak ; but think not I forget —
Dear Father ! how *could* I forget and live —
You and the story of that doleful night
When, Antioch blazing to her topmost towers,
You rushed into the murderous flames, returned
Blind as the grave, but, as you oft have told me,
Clasping your infant Daughter to your heart.

Her. Thy Mother too ! — scarce had I gained
the door,

I caught her voice ; she threw herself upon me,
I felt thy infant brother in her arms ;
She saw my blasted face, — a tide of soldiers
That instant rushed between us, and I heard
Her last death-shriek, distinct among a thousand.

Idon. Nay, Father, stop not ; let me hear it all.

Her. Dear Daughter ! precious relic of that
time, —

For my old age, it doth remain with thee
To make it what thou wilt. Thou hast been told,
That when, on our return from Palestine,
I found how my domains had been usurped,
I took thee in my arms, and we began

Our wanderings together. Providence
At length conducted us to Rossland, — there,
Our melancholy story moved a stranger
To take thee to her home ; and for myself,
Soon after, the good Abbot of St. Cuthbert's
Supplied my helplessness with food and raiment,
And, as thou know'st, gave me that humble Cot
Where now we dwell. — For many years I bore
Thy absence, till old age and fresh infirmities
Exacted thy return, and our reunion.
I did not think that, during that long absence,
My Child, forgetful of the name of Herbert,
Had given her love to a wild Freebooter,
Who here, upon the borders of the Tweed,
Doth prey alike on two distracted countries,
Traitor to both.

Idon. Oh, could you hear his voice !
I will not call on Heaven to vouch for me,
But let this kiss speak what is in my heart.

Enter a Peasant.

Pea. Good morrow, Strangers ! If you want a
Guide,
Let me have leave to serve you !

Idon. My companion
Hath need of rest ; the sight of hut or hostel
Would be most welcome.

Pea. Yon white hawthorn gained,
You will look down into a dell, and there
Will see an ash from which a sign-board hangs ;
The house is hidden by the shade. Old Man,

You seem worn out with travel,—shall I support
you ?

Her. I thank you ; but, a resting-place so near,
'T were wrong to trouble you.

Pea. God speed you both.
[*Exit* Peasant.

Her. Idonea, we must part. Be not alarmed —
'T is but for a few days — a thought has struck me.

Idon. That I should leave you at this house, and
thence

Proceed alone. It shall be so ; for strength
Would fail you ere our journey's end be reached.
[*Exit* HERBERT supported by IDONEA.

Re-enter MARMADUKE and OSWALD.

Mar. This instant will we stop him ——

Osw. Be not hasty,
For, sometimes, in despite of my conviction,
He tempted me to think the story true ;
'T is plain he loves the Maid, and what he said
That savored of aversion to thy name
Appeared the genuine color of his soul, —
Anxiety lest mischief should befall her
After his death.

Mar. I have been much deceived.

Osw. But sure he loves the Maiden, and never
love
Could find delight to nurse itself so strangely,
Thus to torment her with *inventions* ! — death —
There must be truth in this.

Mar. Truth in his story !

He must have felt it then, known what it was,
And in such wise to rack her gentle heart
Had been tenfold cruelty.

Osw. Strange pleasures
Do we poor mortals cater for ourselves!
To see him thus provoke her tenderness
With tales of weakness and infirmity!
I'd wager on his life for twenty years.

Mar. We will not waste an hour in such a cause.

Osw. Why, this is noble! shake her off at once.

Mar. Her virtues are his instruments.— A Man
Who has so practised on the world's cold sense
May well deceive his Child. What! leave her thus,
A prey to a deceiver? — no — no — no —
'T is but a word and then ——

Osw. Something is here
More than we see, or whence this strong aversion?
Marmaduke! I suspect unworthy tales
Have reached his ear; you have had enemies.

Mar. Enemies! — Of his own coinage.

Osw. That may be,
But wherefore slight protection such as you
Have power to yield? perhaps he looks elsewhere. —
I am perplexed.

Mar. What hast thou heard or seen?

Osw. No — no — the thing stands clear of mystery;

(As you have said) he coins himself the slander
With which he taints her ear; — for a plain reason;
He dreads the presence of a virtuous man

Of this same Clifford, he became impatient
And would not hear me.

Mar. No — it cannot be —
I dare not trust myself with such a thought —
Yet whence this strange aversion? You are a man
Not used to rash conjectures —

Osw. If you deem it
A thing worth further notice, we must act
With caution, sift the matter artfully.

[*Exeunt MARMADUKE and OSWALD.*]

SCENE, *the door of the Hostel.*

HERBERT, IDONEA, and Host.

Her. (seated.) As I am dear to you, remember,
Child!

This last request.

Idon. You know me, Sire; farewell!

Her. And are you going then? Come, come,
Idonea,

We must not part, — I have measured many a league
When these old limbs had need of rest, — and now
I will not play the sluggard.

Idon. Nay, sit down.

[*Turning to Host.*]

Good Host, such tendence as you would expect
From your own children, if yourself were sick,
Let this old Man find at your hands; poor Leader,
[*Looking at the dog.*]
We soon shall meet again. If thou neglect

This charge of thine, then ill befall thee! — Look,
The little fool is loth to stay behind.

Sir Host! by all the love you bear to courtesy,
Take care of him, and feed the truant well.

Host. Fear not, I will obey you; — but one so
young,

And one so fair, it goes against my heart
That you should travel unattended, Lady! —
I have a palfrey and a groom: the lad
Shall squire you, (would it not be better, Sir?)
And for less fee than I would let him run
For any lady I have seen this twelvemonth.

Idon. You know, Sir, I have been too long your
guard

Not to have learnt to laugh at little fears.
Why, if a wolf should leap from out a thicket,
A look of mine would send him scouring back,
Unless I differ from the thing I am
When you are by my side.

Her. Idonea, wolves

Are not the enemies that move my fears.

Idon. No more, I pray, of this. Three days at
farthest

Will bring me back — protect him, Saints — fare-
well!

[*Exit* IDONEA.]

Host. 'Tis never drought with us — St. Cuthbert
and his Pilgrims,

Thanks to them, are to us a stream of comfort:
Pity the Maiden did not wait awhile;
She could not, Sir, have failed of company.

Her. Now she is gone, I fain would call her back.

Host. (*calling.*) Holla!

Her. No, no, the business must be done. —
What means this riotous noise?

Host. The villagers
Are flocking in — a wedding festival —
That's all. God save you, Sir.

Enter OSWALD.

Osw. Ha! as I live,
The Baron Herbert.

Host. Mercy, the Baron Herbert!

Osw. So far into your journey! on my life,
You are a lusty traveller. But how fare you?

Her. Well as the wreck I am permits. And
you, Sir?

Osw. I do not see Idonea.

Her. Dutiful Girl,
She has gone before, to spare my weariness.
But what has brought you hither?

Osw. A slight affair
That will be soon despatched.

Her. Did Marmaduke
Receive that letter?

Osw. Be at peace. — 'The tie
Is broken, you will hear no more of *him*.

Her. This is true comfort, thanks a thousand
times!

That noise! — would I had gone with her as far
As the Lord Clifford's Castle: I have heard

The Vagrant must, no doubt, be loitering somewhere

About this ground; she hath a tongue well skilled,
By mingling natural matter of her own
With all the daring fictions I have taught her,
To win belief, such as my plot requires.

[*Exit* OSWALD.

Enter more Villagers, a Musician among them.

Host (to them). Into the court, my Friend, and
perch yourself
Aloft upon the elm-tree. Pretty Maids,
Garlands and flowers, and cakes and merry
thoughts,
Are here, to send the sun into the west
More speedily than you belike would wish.

SCENE *changes to the Wood adjoining the Hostel.*—
MARMADUKE and OSWALD *entering.*

Mar. I would fain hope that we deceive ourselves :

When first I saw him sitting there, alone,
It struck upon my heart I know not how.

Osw. To-day will clear up all. — You marked
a Cottage,

That ragged Dwelling, close beneath a rock
By the brook-side : it is the abode of one,
A Maiden innocent till ensnared by Clifford,
Who soon grew weary of her ; but, alas !

What she had seen and suffered turned her brain.
 Cast off by her Betrayer, she dwells alone,
 Nor moves her hands to any needful work :
 She eats her food which every day the peasants
 Bring to her hut ; and so the Wretch has lived
 Ten years ; and no one ever heard her voice ;
 But every night at the first stroke of twelve
 She quits her house, and, in the neighboring Church-
 yard

Upon the selfsame spot, in rain or storm,
 She paces out the hour 'twixt twelve and one, —
 She paces round and round an Infant's grave.
 And in the Churchyard sod her feet have worn
 A hollow ring ; they say it is knee-deep —
 Ah ! what is here ?

[*A female Beggar rises up, rubbing her eyes
 as if in sleep, — a Child in her arms.*

Beg. Oh ! Gentlemen, I thank you ;
 I've had the saddest dream that ever troubled
 The heart of living creature. — My poor Babe
 Was crying, as I thought, crying for bread
 When I had none to give him ; whereupon,
 I put a slip of foxglove in his hand,
 Which pleased him so, that he was hushed at once :
 When, into one of those same spotted bells
 A bee came darting, which the Child with joy
 Imprisoned there, and held it to its ear,
 And suddenly grew black, as he would die.

Mar. We have no time for this, my babbling
 Gossip ;
 Here's what will comfort you. [*Gives her money.*

Beg. The Saints reward you
For this good deed! — Well, Sirs, this passed away ;
And afterwards I fancied a strange dog,
Trotting alone along the beaten road,
Came to my child as by my side he slept,
And, fondling, licked his face, then on a sudden
Snapped fierce to make a morsel of his head :
But here he is, [*kissing the Child,*] it must have
been a dream.

Osw. When next inclined to sleep, take my
advice,
And put your head, good Woman, under cover.

Beg. O, Sir, you would not talk thus, if you
knew
What life is this of ours, how sleep will master
The weary-worn. — You gentlefolk have got
Warm chambers to your wish. I'd rather be
A stone than what I am. — But two nights gone,
The darkness overtook me, — wind and rain
Beat hard upon my head, — and yet I saw
A glowworm, through the covert of the furze,
Shine calmly as if nothing ailed the sky :
At which I half accused the God in Heaven. —
You must forgive me.

Osw. Ay, and if you think
The Fairies are to blame, and you should chide
Your favorite saint, — no matter, — this good day
Has made amends.

Beg. Thanks to you both ; but, O Sir
How would you like to travel on whole hours

As I have done, my eyes upon the ground,
Expecting still, I knew not how, to find
A piece of money glittering though the dust.

Mar. This woman is a prater. Pray, good
Lady!

Do you tell fortunes?

Beg. O Sir, you are like the rest.
This little one, — it cuts me to the heart, —
Well! they might turn a beggar from their doors,
But there are mothers who can see the babe
Here at my breast, and ask me where I bought it:
This they can do, and look upon my face;
But you, Sir, should be kinder.

Mar. Come hither, Fathers,
And learn what nature is from this poor wretch!

Beg. Ay, Sir, there's nobody that feels for us.
Why now, — but yesterday I overtook
A blind old graybeard and accosted him,
I' th' name of all the Saints, and by the Mass
He should have used me better! — Charity!
If you can melt a rock, he is your man;
But I'll be even with him, — here again
Have I been waiting for him.

Osw. Well, but softly,
Who is it that hath wronged you?

Beg. Mark you me;
I'll point him out; — a Maiden is his guide,
Lovely as Spring's first rose; a little dog,
Tied by a woollen cord, moves on before,
With look as sad as he were dumb; the cur,

I owe him no ill-will, but in good sooth
He does his master credit.

Mar. As I live,
T is Herbert and no other !

Beg. 'Tis a feast to see him,
Lank as a ghost and tall, his shoulders bent,
And long beard white with age ; — yet evermore,
As if he were the only Saint on earth,
He turns his face to heaven.

Osw. But why so violent
Against this venerable man ?

Beg. I'll tell you :
He has the very hardest heart on earth ;
I had as lief turn to the Friar's school
And knock for entrance, in mid-holiday.

Mar. But to your story.

Beg. I was saying, Sir —
Well ! — he has often spurned me like a toad,
But yesterday was worse than all ; — at last
I overtook him, Sirs, my Babe and I,
And begged a little aid for charity :
But he was snappish as a cottage cur.
Well then, says I — I'll out with it ; at which
I cast a look upon the Girl, and felt
As if my heart would burst ; and so I left him.

Osw. I think, good Woman, you are the very
person
Whom, but some few days past, I saw in Eskdale,
At Herbert's door.

Beg. Ay ; and if truth were known,
I have good business there.

Osw. I met you at the threshold,
And he seemed angry.

Beg. Angry! well he might;
And long as I can stir I'll dog him. — Yesterday,
To serve me so, and knowing that he owes
The best of all he has to me and mine.
But 't is all over now. — That good old Lady
Has left a power of riches; and I say it,
If there's a lawyer in the land, the knave
Shall give me half.

Osw. What's this? — I fear, good Woman,
You have been insolent.

Beg. And there's the Baron,
I spied him skulking in his peasant's dress.

Osw. How say you? in disguise? —

Mar. But what's your business
With Herbert or his Daughter?

Beg. Daughter! truly! —
But how's the day? — I fear, my little Boy,
We've overslept ourselves. — Sirs, have you seen
him? [*Offers to go.*

Mar. I must have more of this; — you shall not
stir

An inch, till I am answered. Know you aught
That doth concern this Herbert?

Beg. You are provoked,
And will misuse me, Sir!

Mar. No trifling, Woman! —

Osw. You are as safe as in a sanctuary;
Speak.

Mar. Speak !

Beg. He is a most hard-hearted man.

Mar. Your life is at my mercy.

Beg. Do not harm me,

And I will tell you all ! — You know not, Sir,
What strong temptations press upon the Poor.

Osw. Speak out.

Beg. O Sir, I've been a wicked Woman.

Osw. Nay, but speak out !

Beg. He flattered me, and said
What harvest it would bring us both ; and so,
I parted with the Child.

Mar. Parted with whom ?

Beg. Idonea, as he calls her ; but the Girl
Is mine.

Mar. Yours, Woman ! are you Herbert's wife ?

Beg. Wife, Sir ! his wife ! — not I ; my husband,
Sir,

Was of Kirkoswald, — many a snowy winter
We've weathered out together. My poor Gilfred !
He has been two years in his grave.

Mar. Enough.

Osw. We've solved the riddle. — Miscreant !

Mar. Do you,

Good Dame, repair to Liddesdale and wait
For my return ; be sure you shall have justice.

Osw. A lucky woman ! — go, you have done
good service. [*Aside.*

Mar. (*to himself.*) Eternal praises on the power
that saved her ! —

Osw. (gives her money.) Here's for your little boy, — and when you christen him I'll be his Godfather.

Beg. O Sir, you are merry with me. In grange or farm this Hundred scarcely owns A dog that does not know me. — These good Folks, For love of God, I must not pass their doors ; But I'll be back with my best speed : for you, God bless and thank you both, my gentle Masters.
[Exit Beggar.

Mar. (to himself.) The cruel Viper! — Poor devoted Maid,
Now I *do* love thee.

Osw. I am thunderstruck.

Mar. Where is she — holla !

[*Calling to the Beggar, who returns ; he looks at her steadfastly.*

You are Idonea's Mother ? —
Nay, be not terrified, — it does me good
To look upon you.

Osw. (interrupting.) In a peasant's dress
You saw, who was it ?

Beg. Nay, I dare not speak ;
He is a man, if it should come to his ears
I never shall be heard of more.

Osw. Lord Clifford ?

Beg. What can I do ? believe me, gentle Sirs,
I love her, though I dare not call her daughter.

Osw. Lord Clifford, — did you see him talk with
Herbert ?

Beg. Yes, to my sorrow, — under the great oak
At Herbert's door. And when he stood beside
The blind Man — at the silent Girl he looked
With such a look — it makes me tremble, Sir,
To think of it.

Osw. Enough ! you may depart ;

Mar. (to himself.) Father! — to God himself we
cannot give

A holier name ; and, under such a mask,
To lead a Spirit, spotless as the blessed,
To that abhorrèd den of brutish vice ! —
Oswald, the firm foundation of my life
Is going from under me ; these strange discoveries —
Looked at from every point of fear or hope,
Duty or love — involve, I feel, my ruin.

ACT II.

SCENE, *A Chamber in the Hostel.* — OSWALD alone,
*rising from the Table on which he had been
writing.*

Osw. They chose *him* for their Chief ! — what
covert part

He, in the preference, modest Youth, might take,
I neither know nor care. The insult bred
More of contempt than hatred ; both are flown ;
That either e'er existed is my shame :
'T was a dull spark, a most unnatural fire,

That died the moment the air breathed upon it.
— These fools of feeling are mere birds of winter
That haunt some barren island of the north,
Where, if a famishing man stretch forth his hand,
They think it is to feed them. I have left him
To solitary meditation ; — now
For a few swelling phrases, and a flash
Of truth, enough to dazzle and to blind,
And he is mine for ever. — Here he comes.

Enter MARMADUKE.

Mar. These ten years she has moved her lips
all day
And never speaks !

Osw. Who is it ?

Mar. I have seen her.

Osw. Oh ! the poor tenant of that ragged home-
stead,

Her whom the monster, Clifford, drove to madness,

Mar. I met a peasant near the spot ; he told me,
These ten years she had sat all day alone
Within those empty walls.

Osw. I too have seen her ;
Chancing to pass this way some six months gone,
At midnight, I betook me to the Churchyard :
The moon shone clear, the air was still, so still
The trees were silent as the graves beneath them.
Long did I watch, and saw her pacing round
Upon the selfsame spot, still round and round,
Her lips for ever moving.

Mar. At her door
Rooted I stood ; for, looking at the woman,
I thought I saw the skeleton of Idonea.

Osw. But the pretended Father ——

Mar. Earthly law
Measures not crimes like his.

Osw. We rank not, happily,
With those who take the spirit of their rule
From that soft class of devotees who feel
Reverence for life so deeply, that they spare
The verminous brood, and cherish what they spare
While feeding on their bodies. Would that Idonea
Were present, to the end that we might hear
What she can urge in his defence ; she loves him.

Mar. Yes, loves him ; 't is a truth that multi-
plies
His guilt a thousand-fold.

Osw. 'T is most perplexing :
What must be done ?

Mar. We will conduct her hither ;
These walls shall witness it, — from first to last
He shall reveal himself.

Osw. Happy are we,
Who live in these disputed tracts, that own
No law but what each man makes for himself ;
Here justice has indeed a field of triumph.

Mar. Let us begone and bring her hither ; —
here
The truth shall be laid open, his guilt proved
Before her face. The rest be left to me.

Osw. You will be firm : but though we well may
trust

The issue to the justice of the cause,
Caution must not be flung aside ; remember,
Yours is no common life. Self-stationed here,
Upon these savage confines, we have seen you
Stand like an isthmus 'twixt two stormy seas,
That oft have checked their fury at your bidding.

'Mid the deep holds of Solway's mossy waste,
Your single virtue has transformed a Band
Of fierce barbarians into ministers
Of peace and order. Aged men with tears
Have blessed their steps, the fatherless retire
For shelter to their banners. But it is,
As you must needs have deeply felt, it is
In darkness and in tempest that we seek
The majesty of Him who rules the world.
Benevolence, that has no heart to use
The wholesome ministry of pain and evil,
Becomes at last weak and contemptible.
Your generous qualities have won due praise,
But vigorous spirits look for something more
Than youth's spontaneous products ; and to-day
You will not disappoint them ; and hereafter ——

Mar. You are wasting words ; hear me then,
once for all :

You are a man, — and therefore, if compassion,
Which to our kind is natural as life,
Be known unto you, you will love this woman,

Even as I do ; but I should loathe the light,
If I could think one weak or partial feeling ——

Osw. You will forgive me ——

Mar.

If I ever knew

My heart, could penetrate its inmost core,
'T is at this moment. — Oswald, I have loved
To be the friend and father of the oppressed,
A comforter of sorrow ; — there is something
Which looks like a transition in my soul,
And yet it is not. — Let us lead him hither.

Osw. Stoop for a moment ; 't is an act of justice ;

And where 's the triumph, if the delegate
Must fall in the execution of his office ?
The deed is done — if you will have it so —
Here where we stand, — that tribe of vulgar
wretches

(You saw them gathering for the festival)

Rush in, — the villains seize us ——

Mar.

Seize !

Osw.

Yes, they —

Men who are little given to sift and weigh —
Would wreak on us the passion of the moment.

Mar. The cloud will soon disperse ; — farewell !

But stay,

Thou wilt relate the story.

Osw.

Am I neither

To bear a part in this man's punishment,
Nor be its witness ?

Mar.

I had many hopes

That were most dear to me, and some will bear
To be transferred to thee.

Osw. When I'm dishonored

Mar. I would preserve thee. How may this
be done?

Osw. By showing that you look beyond the instant.
A few leagues hence we shall have open ground,
And nowhere upon earth is place so fit
To look upon the deed. Before we enter
The barren Moor, hangs from a beetling rock
The shattered Castle in which Clifford oft
Has held infernal orgies,— with the gloom,
And very superstition of the place,
Seasoning his wickedness. The debauchee
Would there perhaps have gathered the first fruits
Of this mock father's guilt.

Enter Host conducting HERBERT.

Host. The Baron Herbert
Attends your pleasure.

Osw. (to Host). We are ready.

(*To HERBERT.*) Sir!

I hope you are refreshed. — I have just written
A notice to your daughter, that she may know
What is become of you. — You'll sit down and
sign it;

'T will glad her heart to see her father's signature.

[*Gives the letter he had written.*]

Her. Thanks for your care.

[*Sits down and writes.*— *Exit Host.*]

Osw. (aside to MARMADUKE.) Perhaps it would
be useful

That you too should subscribe your name.

[MARMADUKE overlooks HERBERT — then writes
— examines the letter eagerly.]

Mar. I cannot leave this paper.

[*He puts it up, agitated.*]

Osw. (aside.)

Dastard! Come.

[MARMADUKE goes towards HERBERT and supports him. — MARMADUKE tremblingly beckons OSWALD to take his place.]

Mar. (as he quits HERBERT.) There is a palsy in his limbs, — he shakes.

[*Exeunt OSWALD and HERBERT, — MARMADUKE following.*]

SCENE changes to a Wood. — A Group of Pilgrims and IDONEA with them.

First Pil. A grove of darker and more lofty
shade

I never saw.

Sec. Pil. The music of the birds
Drops deadened from a roof so thick with leaves.

Old Pil. This news! it made my heart leap up
with joy.

Idon. I scarcely can believe it.

Old Pil. Myself, I heard
The Sheriff read, in open court, a letter
Which purported it was the royal pleasure

The Baron Herbert, who, as was supposed,
Had taken refuge in this neighborhood,
Should be forthwith restored. The hearing, Lady,
Filled my dim eyes with tears. — When I returned
From Palestine, and brought with me a heart,
Though rich in heavenly, poor in earthly comfort,
I met your father, then a wandering outcast :
He had a guide, a shepherd's boy ; but grieved
He was that one so young should pass his youth
In such sad service ; and he parted with him.
We joined our tales of wretchedness together,
And begged our daily bread from door to door.
I talk familiarly to you, sweet Lady !
For once you loved me.

Idon. You shall back with me
And see your friend again. The good old man
Will be rejoiced to greet you.

Old Pil. It seems but yesterday
That a fierce storm o'ertook us, worn with travel,
In a deep wood remote from any town.
A cave that opened to the road presented
A friendly shelter, and we entered in.

Idon. And I was with you ?

Old Pil. If indeed 't was you ; —
But you were then a tottering little-one. —
We sat us down. The sky grew dark and darker .
I struck my flint, and built up a small fire
With rotten boughs and leaves, such as the winds
Of many autumns in the cave had piled.
Meanwhile the storm fell heavy on the woods ;

Our little fire sent forth a cheering warmth,
 And we were comforted, and talked of comfort;
 But 't was an angry night, and o'er our heads
 The thunder rolled in peals that would have made
 A sleeping man uneasy in his bed.

O Lady, you have need to love your father.
 His voice — methinks I hear it now, his voice
 When, after a broad flash that filled the cave,
 He said to me, that he had seen his child,
 A face (no cherub's face more beautiful)
 Revealed by lustre brought with it from heaven;
 And it was you, dear Lady!

Idon. God be praised,
 That I have been his comforter till now!
 And will be so through every change of fortune
 And every sacrifice his peace requires. —
 Let us be gone with speed, that he may hear
 These joyful tidings from no lips but mine.

[*Exeunt IDONEA and Pilgrims.*]

SCENE, the Area of a half-ruined Castle,—on
 one side the entrance to a Dungeon. — OSWALD
 and MARMADUKE pacing backwards and for-
 wards.

Mar. 'Tis a wild night.

Osw. I'd give my cloak and bonnet
 For sight of a warm fire.

Mar. The wind blows keen;
 My hands are numb.

Ha ! ha ! 't is nipping cold.

[*Blowing his fingers.*

I long for news of our brave comrades ; Lacy
Would drive those Scottish Rovers to their dens
If once they blew a horn this side the Tweed.

Mar. I think I see a second range of Towers ;
This castle has another Area, — come,
Let us examine it.

'T is a bitter night;

I hope Idonea is well housed. That horseman,
Who at full speed swept by us where the wood
Roared in the tempest, was within an ace
Of sending to his grave our precious Charge:
That would have been a vile mischance.

It would.

Osw. Justice had been most cruelly defrauded.

Mar. Most cruelly.

As up the steep we clomb,

I saw a distant fire in the northeast ;
I took it for the blaze of Cheviot Beacon :
With proper speed, our quarters may be gained
To-morrow evening.

Looks restlessly towards the mouth of the dungeon.

When, upon the plank,

I had led him 'cross the torrent, his voice blessed
me:

You could not hear, for the foam beat the rocks
With deafening noise, — the benediction fell
Back on himself; but changed into a curse.

Osw. As well indeed it might.

Mar. And this you deem
The fittest place?

Osw. (aside.) He is growing pitiful.

Mar. (listening.) What an odd moaning that
is! —

Osw. Mighty odd
The wind should pipe a little, while we stand
Cooling our heels in this way! — I'll begin
And count the stars.

Mar. (still listening.) That dog of his, you are sure,
Could not come after us, — he *must* have perished;
The torrent would have dashed an oak to splinters.
You said you did not like his looks, — that he
Would trouble us; if he were here again,
I swear the sight of him would quail me more
Than twenty armies.

Osw. How?

Mar. The old blind man,
When you had told him the mischance, was troubled
Even to the shedding of some natural tears
Into the torrent over which he hung,
Listening in vain.

Osw. He has a tender heart!

[OSWALD offers to go down into the dungeon.]

Mar. How now, what mean you?

Osw. Truly, I was going
To waken our stray Baron. Were there not
A farm or dwelling-house within five leagues,
We should deserve to wear a cap and bells,
Three good round years, for playing the fool here
In such a night as this.

Mar. Stop, stop.

Osw. Perhaps

You 'd better like we should descend together,
And lie down by his side, — what say you to it?
Three of us, — we should keep each other warm:
I'll answer for it that our four-legged friend
Shall not disturb us; further I'll not engage;
Come, come, for manhood's sake!

Mar. These drowsy shiverings,
This mortal stupor which is creeping over me,
What do they mean? Were this my single body
Opposed to armies, not a nerve would tremble:
Why do I tremble now? — Is not the depth
Of this man's crimes beyond the reach of thought?
And yet, in plumbing the abyss for judgment,
Something I strike upon which turns my mind
Back on herself, I think, again, — my breast
Concentres all the terrors of the Universe:
I look at him and tremble like a child.

Osw. Is it possible?

Mar. One thing you noticed not:
Just as we left the glen a clap of thunder
Burst on the mountains, with hell-rousing force.
This is a time, said he, when guilt may shudder;
But there's a Providence for them who walk
In helplessness, when innocence is with them.
At this audacious blasphemy, I thought
The spirit of vengeance seemed to ride the air.

Osw. Why are you not the man you were that
moment?

[He draws MARMADUKE to the dungeon.]

Mar. You say he was asleep, — look at this arm,
And tell me if 't is fit for such a work.

Oswald, Oswald ! [*Leans upon OSWALD.*]

Osw. This is some sudden seizure !

Mar. A most strange faintness ; — will you hunt
me out

A draught of water ?

Osw. Nay, to see you thus

Moves me beyond my bearing. — I will try

To gain the torrent's brink. [*Exit OSWALD.*]

Mar. (*after a pause.*) It seems an age
Since that man left me. — No, I am not lost.

Her. (*at the mouth of the dungeon.*) Give me your
hand ; where are you, Friends ? and tell me
How goes the night.

Mar. 'T is hard to measure time,
In such a weary night, and such a place.

Her. I do not hear the voice of my friend
Oswald.

Mar. A minute past, he went to fetch a draught
Of water from the torrent. 'T is, you 'll say,
A cheerless beverage.

Her. How good it was in you
To stay behind ! — Hearing at first no answer,
I was alarmed.

Mar. No wonder ; this is a place
'That well may put some fears into *your* heart.

Her. Why so ? a roofless rock had been a com-
fort,
Storm-beaten and bewildered as we were ;

And in a night like this, to lend your cloaks
To make a bed for me!—My Girl will weep
When she is told of it.

Mar. This daughter of yours
Is very dear to you.

Her. Oh ! but you are young ;
Over your head twice twenty years must roll,
With all their natural weight of sorrow and pain,
Ere can be known to you how much a father
May love his child.

Mar. Thank you, old man, for this ! [*Aside.*

Her. Fallen am I, and worn out, a useless man ;
Kindly have you protected me to-night,
And no return have I to make but prayers ;
May you in age be blest with such a daughter ! —
When from the Holy Land I had returned
Sightless, and from my heritage was driven,
A wretched outcast — But this strain of thought
Would lead me to talk fondly.

Mar. Do not fear ;
Your words are precious to my ears ; go on.

Her. You will forgive me, but my heart runs over.

When my old Leader slipped into the flood
And perished, what a piercing outcry you
Sent after him. I have loved you ever since.
You start, — where are we?

Mar. Oh, there is no danger,
The cold blast struck me.

Her. 'T was a foolish question.

Mar. But when you were an outcast? — Heaven
is just ;

Your piety would not miss its due reward ;
The little orphan then would be your succor,
And do good service, though she knew it not.

Her. I turned me from the dwellings of my
fathers,
Where none but those who trampled on my rights
Seemed to remember me. To the wide world
I bore her, in my arms ; her looks won pity ;
She was my raven in the wilderness,
And brought me food. Have I not cause to love
her ?

Mar. Yes.

Her. More than ever parent loved a child !

Mar. Yes, yes.

Her. I will not murmur, merciful God !
I will not murmur ; blasted as I have been,
'Thou hast left me ears to hear my daughter's voice,
And arms to fold her to my heart. Submissively
Thee I adore, and find my rest in faith.

Enter OSWALD.

Osw. Herbert ! — confusion ! (*aside.*) Here it
is, my Friend, [*Presents the Horn.*
A charming beverage for you to carouse,
This bitter night.

Her. Ha ! Oswald ! ten bright crosses
I would have given, not many minutes gone,
'To have heard your voice.

Osw. Your couch, I fear, good Baron,
Has been but comfortless ; and yet that place,
When the tempestuous wind first drove us hither,
Felt warm as a wren's nest. You'd better turn
And under covert rest till break of day,
Or till the storm abate.

(*To MARMADUKE aside.*) He has restored you.
No doubt you have been nobly entertained ?
But soft ! — How came he forth ? The Nightmare

Conscience
Has driven him out of harbor ?

Mar. I believe
You have guessed right.

Her. The trees renew their murmur :
Come, let us house together.

[*OSWALD conducts him to the dungeon.*]

Osw. (returns.) Had I not
Esteemed you worthy to conduct the affair
To its most fit conclusion, do you think
I would so long have struggled with my nature,
And smothered all that's man in me ? — Away ! —

[*Looking towards the dungeon.*]
This man's the property of him who best
Can feel his crimes. I have resigned a privilege ;
It now becomes my duty to resume it.

Mar. Touch not a finger —

Osw. What then must be done ?

Mar. Which way so'er I turn, I am perplexed.

Osw. Now, on my life, I grieve for you. The
misery

Of doubt is insupportable. Pity, the facts
Did not admit of stronger evidence ;
Twelve honest men, plain men, would set us right ;
Their verdict would abolish these weak scruples.

Mar. Weak ! I am weak ; — there does my torment lie,
Feeding itself.

Osw. Verily, when he said
How his old heart would leap to hear his steps,
You thought his voice the echo of Idonea's.

Mar. And never heard a sound so terrible.

Osw. Perchance you think so now ?

Mar. I cannot do it :
Twice did I spring to grasp his withered throat,
When such a sudden weakness fell upon me,
I could have dropped to sleep upon his breast.

Osw. Justice,—is there not thunder in the
word ?

Shall it be law to stab the petty robber
Who aims but at our purse ; and shall this Par-
ricide —

Worse is he far, far worse (if foul dishonor
Be worse than death) to that confiding creature
Whom he to more than filial love and duty
Hath falsely trained — shall he fulfil his purpose ?
But you are fallen.

Mar. Fallen should I be indeed —
Murder — perhaps asleep, blind, old, alone,
Betrayed, in darkness ! Here to strike the blow —
Away ? away ! — [Flings away his sword.

Osw. Nay, I have done with you :
 We'll lead him to the Convent. He shall live,
 And she shall love him. With unquestioned title
 He shall be seated in his Barony,
 And we too chant the praise of his good deeds.
 I now perceive we do mistake our masters,
 And most despise the men who best can teach us :
 Henceforth it shall be said that bad men only
 Are brave : Clifford is brave ; and that old man
 Is brave.

[*Taking MARMADUKE'S sword and giving it to him.*

To Clifford's arms he would have led
 His victim, — haply to this desolate house.

Mar. (*advancing to the dungeon.*) It must be
 ended ! —

Osw. Softly ; do not rouse him ;
 He will deny it to the last. He lies
 Within the vault, a spear's length to the left.

[*MARMADUKE descends to the dungeon.*
 (*Alone.*) The villains rose in mutiny to destroy me ;
 I could have quelled the cowards, but this stripling
 Must needs step in and save my life. The look
 With which he gave the boon, — I see it now !
 The same that tempted me to loathe the gift. —
 For this old venerable Graybeard, — faith,
 'T is his own fault if he hath got a face
 Which doth play tricks with them that look on it :
 'T was this that put it in my thoughts, — that coun-
 tenance, —

His staff, — his figure. — Murder! — what, of whom?

We kill a worn-out horse, and who but women
Sigh at the deed? Hew down a withered tree,
And none look grave but dotards. He may live
To thank me for this service. Rainbow arches,
Highways of dreaming passion, have too long,
Young as he is, diverted wish and hope
From the unpretending ground we mortals
tread; —

Then shatter the delusion, break it up
And set him free. What follows? I have learned
That things will work to ends the slaves o' the
world

Do never dream of. I *have* been what he —
This boy — when he comes forth with bloody
hands —

Might envy, and am now — But he shall know
What I am now. [*Goes and listens at the dungeon.*
Praying or parleying? — Tut!
Is he not eyeless? He has been half dead
These fifteen years —

*Enter female Beggar with two or three of her
Companions.*

(*Turning abruptly.*) Ha! speak! — what thing
art thou?

(*Recognizes her.*) Heavens! my good Friend!

[*To her.*

Beg.

Forgive me, gracious Sir! —

Osw. (to her companions.) Begone, ye Slaves,
or I will raise a whirlwind
And send ye dancing to the clouds, like leaves.

[*They retire affrighted.*]

Beg. Indeed we meant no harm ; we lodge some-
times

In this deserted Castle. — *I repent me.*

[*OSWALD goes to the dungeon, — listens, — re-
turns to the Beggar.*]

Osw. Woman, thou hast a helpless infant, —
keep

Thy secret for its sake, or verily
That wretched life of thine shall be the forfeit.

Beg. I do repent me, Sir ; I fear the curse
Of that blind man. 'T was not your money, Sir —

Osw. Begone !

Beg. (going). There is some wicked deed in
hand : [Aside.

Would I could find the old man and his daughter.
[Exit Beggar.

MARMADUKE re-enters from the dungeon.

Osw. It is all over then ; — your foolish fears
Are hushed to sleep, by your own act and deed,
Made quiet as he is.

Mar. Why came you down ?
And when I felt your hand upon my arm
And spake to you, why did you give no answer ?
Feared you to waken him ? He must have been
In a deep sleep. I whispered to him thrice.

There are the stangest echoes in that place !

Osw. Tut ! let them gabble till the day of doom.

Mar. Scarcely, by groping, had I reached the spot,

When round my wrist I felt a cord drawn tight,
As if the blind man's dog were pulling at it.

Osw. But after that ?

Mar. The features of Idonea
Lurked in his face ——

Osw. Psha ! Never to these eyes
Will retribution show itself again
With aspect so inviting. Why forbid me
To share your triumph ?

Mar. Yes, her very look,
Smiling in sleep ——

Osw. A pretty feat of Fancy !

Mar. Though but a glimpse, it sent me to my
prayers.

Osw. Is he alive ?

Mar. What mean you ? who alive ?

Osw. Herbert ! since you will have it, Baron
Herbert ;

He who will gain his Seignory when Idonea
Hath become Clifford's harlot, — is *he* living ?

Mar. The old man in that dungeon *is* alive.

Osw. Henceforth, then, will I never in camp or
field

Obey you more. Your weakness to the Band
Shall be proclaimed : brave men, they all shall
hear it.

You a protector of humanity !

Avenger you of outraged innocence !

Mar. 'Twas dark, — dark as the grave; yet did

I see,

Saw him, — his face turned toward me ; and I tell
thee

Idonea's filial countenance was there

To baffle me, — it put me to my prayers.

Upwards I cast my eyes, and, through a crev-
ice,

Beheld a star twinkling above my head,

And, by the living God, I could not do it.

[*Sinks exhausted.*]

Osw. (to himself.) Now may I perish if this
turn do more

Than make me change my course.

(*To MARMADUKE.*)

Dear Marmaduke,

My words were rashly spoken ; I recall them :

I feel my error ; shedding human blood

Is a most serious thing.

Mar.

Not I alone,

Thou too art deep in guilt.

Osw.

We have indeed

Been most presumptuous. There is guilt in this,

Else could so strong a mind have ever known

These trepidations ? Plain it is that Heaven

Has marked out this foul wretch as one whose
crimes

Must never come before a mortal judgment-seat,

Or be chastised by mortal instruments.

Mar. A thought that 's worth a thousand worlds!

[*Goes towards the dungeon.*

Osw.

I grieve

That, in my zeal, I have caused you so much pain.

Mar. Think not of that! 't is over, — we are safe.

Osw. (*as if to himself, yet speaking aloud.*) The truth is hideous, but how stifle it?

[*Turning to MARMADUKE.*

Give me your sword; — nay, here are stones and fragments,

The least of which would beat out a man's brains;

Or you might drive your head against that wall.

No! this is not the place to hear the tale:

It should be told you pinioned in your bed,

Or on some vast and solitary plain

Blown to you from a trumpet.

Mar.

Why talk thus?

Whate'er the monster brooding in your breast,

I care not: fear I have none, and cannot fear —

[*The sound of a horn is heard.*

That horn again. 'T is some one of our Troop;

What do they here? Listen!

Osw.

What! dogged like thieves!

Enter WALLACE and LACY, &c.

Lacy. You are found at last, thanks to the vagrant troop

For not misleading us.

Osw. (*looking at WALLACE.*) That subtle gray-beard, —

I'd rather see my father's ghost.

Lacy. (to MARMADUKE.) My Captain,
We come by order of the Band. Belike
You have not heard that Henry has at last
Dissolved the Barons' League, and sent abroad
His Sheriffs with fit force to reinstate
The genuine owners of such Lands and Baronies
As, in these long commotions, have been seized.
His power is this way tending. It befits us
To stand upon our guard, and with our swords
Defend the innocent.

Mar. Lacy ! we look
But at the surfaces of things ; we hear
Of towns in flames, fields ravaged, young and old
Driven out in troops to want and nakedness ;
Then grasp our swords and rush upon a cure
That flatters us, because it asks not thought :
The deeper malady is better hid ;
The world is poisoned at the heart.

Lacy. What mean you?

Wal. (*whose eye has been fixed suspiciously upon*
OSWALD.) Ay, what is it you mean?

Mar. Harkee, my Friends ; —

[*Appearing gay.*

Were there a man who, being weak and helpless
And most forlorn, should bribe a mother, pressed
By penury, to yield him up her daughter,
A little infant, and instruct the babe,
Prattling upon his knee, to call him Father——

Lacy. Why, if his heart be tender, that offence I could forgive him.

Mur. (going on.) And should he make the child

An instrument of falsehood, should he teach her
To stretch her arms, and dim the gladsome light
Of infant playfulness with piteous looks
Of misery that was not ——

Lacy. Troth, 't is hard, —
But in a world like ours ——

Mar. (changing his tone.) This selfsame man, —
Even while he printed kisses on the cheek
Of this poor babe, and taught its innocent tongue
To lisp the name of Father, — could he look
To the unnatural harvest of that time
When he should give her up, a woman grown,
To him who bid the highest in the market
Of foul pollution ——

Lacy. The whole visible world
Contains not such a monster!

Mar. For this purpose
Should he resolve to taint her soul by means
Which bathe the limbs in sweat to think of them;
Should he, by tales which would draw tears from
iron,

Work on her nature, and so turn compassion
And gratitude to ministers of vice,
And make the spotless spirit of filial love
Prime mover in a plot to damn his victim
Both soul and body ——

Wal. 'Tis too horrible;
Oswald, what say you to it?

Lacy. Hew him down,
And fling him to the ravens.

Mar. But his aspect
It is so meek, his countenance so venerable.

Wal. (with an appearance of mistrust.) But how,
what say you, Oswald?

Lacy. (at the same moment.) Stab him, were it
Before the Altar.

Mar. What, if he were sick,
Tottering upon the very verge of life,
And old, and blind ——

Lacy. Blind, say you?

Osw. (coming forward.) Are we men,
Or own we baby spirits? Genuine courage
Is not an accidental quality,
A thing dependent for its casual birth
On opposition and impediment.

Wisdom, if Justice speak the word, beats down
The giant's strength; and, at the voice of Justice,
Spare not the worm. The giant and the worm, —
She weighs them in one scale. The wiles of woman,
And craft of age, seducing reason, first
Made weakness a protection, and obscured
The moral shapes of things. His tender cries
And helpless innocence, — do they protect
The infant lamb? and shall the infirmities,
Which have enabled this enormous culprit
To perpetrate his crimes, serve as a sanctuary
To cover him from punishment? Shame! — Justice,
Admitting no resistance, bends alike

The feeble and the strong. She needs not here
Her bonds and chains, which make the mighty
feeble.

— We recognize in this old man a victim
Prepared already for the sacrifice.

Lacy. By heaven, his words are reason !

Osw. Yes, my Friends,

His countenance is meek and venerable ;
And, by the Mass, to see him at his prayers ! —
I am of flesh and blood, and may I perish
When my heart does not ache to think of it ! —
Poor victim ! not a virtue under heaven
But what was made an engine to ensnare thee ;
But yet I trust, Idonea, thou art safe.

Lacy. Idonea !

Wal. How ! what ? your Idonea ?

[*To* MARMADUKE.

Mar. *Mine ;*

But now no longer mine. You know Lord Clifford ;
He is the man to whom the maiden — pure
As beautiful, and gentle and benign,
And in her ample heart loving even me —
Was to be yielded up.

Lacy. Now, by the head
Of my own child, this man must die ; my hand,
A worthier wanting, shall itself entwine
In his gray hairs !

Mar. (*to* LACY.) I love the father in thee.
You know me, Friends ; I have a heart to feel,
And I have felt, more than perhaps becomes me
Or duty sanctions.

Lacy. We will have ample justice.
Who are we, Friends? Do we not live on ground
Where souls are self-defended, free to grow
Like mountain oaks rocked by the stormy wind.
Mark the Almighty Wisdom, which decreed
This monstrous crime to be laid open — *here*,
Where Reason has an eye that she can use,
And men alone are umpires. To the Camp
He shall be led, and there, the Country round
All gathered to the spot, in open day
Shall Nature be avenged.

Osw. 'T is nobly thought ;
His death will be a monument for ages.

Mar. (*to LACY.*) I thank you for that hint. He
shall be brought
Before the Camp, and would that best and wisest
Of every country might be present. There,
His crime shall be proclaimed ; and for the rest,
It shall be done as Wisdom shall decide :
Meanwhile, do you two hasten back and see
That all is well prepared.

Wal. We will obey you.
(*Aside.*) But softly ! we must look a little nearer.

Mar. Tell where you found us. At some future
time
I will explain the cause. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE, *the door of the Hostel, a group of Pilgrims as before ; IDONEA and the Host among them.*

Host. Lady, you 'll find your father at the Convent

As I have told you. He left us yesterday
With two companions ; one of them, as seemed,
His most familiar friend. (*Going.*) There was
a letter

Of which I heard them speak, but that I fancy
Has been forgotten.

Idon. (*to Host.*) Farewell !

Host. Gentle pilgrims,
St. Cuthbert speed you on your holy errand.

[*Exeunt IDONEA and Pilgrims.*

SCENE, *a desolate Moor.*

OSWALD (*alone*).

Osw. Carry him to the Camp ! Yes, to the Camp.
O Wisdom ! a most wise resolve ! and then,
That half a word should blow it to the winds !
This last device must end my work. — Methinks
It were a pleasant pastime to construct
A scale and table of belief, — as thus, —
Two columns, one for passion, one for proof ;
Each rises as the other falls : and first,
Passion a unit and *against* us, — proof, —

Nay, we must travel in another path,
Or we 're stuck fast for ever ; — passion, then,
Shall be a unit *for* us ; proof, — no, passion !
We 'll not insult thy majesty by time,
Person, and place, — the where, the when, the how,
And all particulars that dull brains require
To constitute the spiritless shape of Fact,
They bow to, calling the idol, Demonstration.
A whipping to the Moralists who preach
That misery is a sacred thing : for me,
I know no cheaper engine to degrade a man,
Nor any half so sure. This stripling's mind
Is shaken till the dregs float on the surface ;
And, in the storm and anguish of the heart,
He talks of a transition in his soul,
And dreams that he is happy. We dissect
The senseless body, and why not the mind ? —
These are strange sights, — the mind of man, up-
turned,
Is in all natures a strange spectacle ;
In some a hideous one — hem ! shall I stop ?
No. — Thoughts and feelings will sink deep, but
then
They have no substance. Pass but a few minutes,
And something shall be done which Memory
May touch, whene'er her vassals are at work.

Enter MARMADUKE, from behind.

Osw. (turning to meet him.) But listen, for
my peace —

Mar. Why, I believe you.

Osw. But hear the proofs ——

Mar. Ay, prove that, when two peas
Lie snugly in a pod, the pod must then
Be larger than the peas, — prove this, — 't were
matter

Worthy the hearing. Fool was I to dream
It ever could be otherwise !

Osw. Last night
When I returned with water from the brook,
I overheard the villains, — every word
Like red-hot iron burnt into my heart.
Said one, "It is agreed on. The blind man
Shall feign a sudden illness, and the girl,
Who on her journey must proceed alone,
Under pretence of violence, be seized.
She is," continued the detested slave,
"She is right willing, — strange if she were not ! —
They say, Lord Clifford is a savage man ;
But, faith, to see him in his silken tunic,
Fitting his low voice to the minstrel's harp,
There 's witchery in 't. I never knew a maid
That could withstand it. 'True," continued he,
"When we arranged the affair, she wept a little.
(Not the less welcome to my Lord for that,)
And said, 'My father, he will have it so.'"

Mar. I am your hearer.

Osw. This I caught, and more
That may not be retold to any ear.
The obstinate bolt of a small iron door

Detained them near the gateway of the Castle.
By a dim lantern's light I saw that wreaths
Of flowers were in their hands, as if designed
For festive decoration ; and they said,
With brutal laughter and most foul allusion,
That they should share the banquet with their
lord

And his new favorite.

Mar.

Misery !—

Osiw.

I knew

How you would be disturbed by this dire news,
And therefore chose this solitary Moor,
Here to impart the tale, of which, last night,
I strove to ease my mind, when our two com-
rades,

Commissioned by the Band, burst in upon us.

Mar. Last night, when moved to lift the aveng-
ing steel,

I did believe all things were shadows, — yea,
Living or dead, all things were bodiless,
Or but the mutual mockeries of body,
Till that same star summoned me back again.
Now I could laugh till my ribs ached. O fool!
To let a creed, built in the heart of things,
Dissolve before a twinkling atom! — Oswald,
I could fetch lessons out of wiser schools
Than you have entered, were it worth the pains.
Young as I am, I might go forth a teacher,
And you should see how deeply I could reason
Of love in all its shapes, beginnings, — ends;

Of moral qualities in their diverse aspects ;
Of actions, and their laws and tendencies.

Osw. You take it as it merits ——

Mar.

One a King,

General or Cham, Sultan or Emperor,
Strews twenty acres of good meadow-ground
With carcasses, in lineament and shape
And substance nothing differing from his own,
But that they cannot stand up of themselves ;
Another sits i' th' sun, and by the hour
Floats kingcups in the brook ; — a Hero one
We call, and scorn the other as Time's spendthrift ;
But have they not a world of common ground
To occupy, — both fools, or wise alike,
Each in his way ?

Osw.

Troth, I begin to think so.

Mar. Now for the corner-stone of my philosophy :

I would not give a denier for the man
Who, on such provocation as this earth
Yields, could not chuck his babe beneath the chin,
And send it with a fillip to its grave.

Osw. Nay, you leave me behind.

Mar.

'That such a one,

So pious in demeanor ! in his look
So saintly and so pure ! —— Hark'ee, my Friend,
I'll plant myself before Lord Clifford's Castle,
A surly mastiff kennels at the gate,
And he shall howl and I will laugh, a medley
Most tunable.

Osw. In faith, a pleasant scheme ;
But take your sword along with you, for that
Might in such neighborhood find seemly use. —
But first, how wash our hands of this old man ?

Mar. O yes, that mole, that viper in the path ;
Plague on my memory, him had I forgotten.

Osw. You know we left him sitting, — see him
yonder.

Mar. Ha ! ha ! —

Osw. As 't will be but a moment's work,
I will stroll on ; you follow when 't is done.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE changes to another part of the Moor at a short distance. — HERBERT is discovered seated on a stone.

Her. A sound of laughter, too ! — 't is well. —
I feared

The stranger had some pitiable sorrow
Pressing upon his solitary heart.

Hush ! — 't is the feeble and earth-loving wind
That creeps along the bells of the crisp heather.
Alas ! 't is cold, — I shiver in the sunshine ; —
What can this mean ? There is a psalm that
speaks.

Of God's parental mercies, — with Idonea
I used to sing it. — Listen ! — what foot is
there ?

Enter MARMADUKE.

Mar. (aside, looking at HERBERT.) And I have
loved this man ! and *she* hath loved him !
And I loved her, and she loves the Lord Clifford !
And there it ends ; — if this be not enough
To make mankind merry for evermore,
Then plain it is as day, that eyes were made
For a wise purpose, — verily to weep with !

[Looking round.]

A pretty prospect this, a masterpiece
Of Nature, finished with most curious skill !
(*To HERBERT.*) Good Baron, have you ever
practised tillage ?

Pray tell me what this land is worth by the acre ?

Her. How glad I am to hear your voice ! I know
not

Wherein I have offended you ; — last night
I found in you the kindest of protectors ;
This morning, when I spoke of weariness,
You from my shoulder took my scrip and threw it
About your own ; but for these two hours past
Once only have you spoken, when the lark
Whirred from among the fern beneath our feet,
And I, no coward in my better days,
Was almost terrified.

Mar. That's excellent ! —

So, you bethought you of the many ways
In which a man may come to his end, whose crimes
Have roused all nature up against him — pshaw ! —

Her. For mercy's sake, is nobody in sight ?
No traveller, peasant, herdsman ?

Mar.

Not a soul:

Here is a tree, ragged, and bent, and bare,
That turns its goat's-beard flakes of pea-green
moss

From the stern breathing of the rough sea-wind;
This have we, but no other company:
Commend me to the place. If a man should die
And leave his body here, it were all one
As he were twenty fathoms underground.

Her. Where is our common friend?*Mar.*

A ghost, methinks, —

The spirit of a murdered man, for instance, —
Might have fine room to ramble about here,
A grand domain to squeak and gibber in.

Her. Lost Man! if thou have any close-pent guilt
Pressing upon thy heart, and this the hour
Of visitation —

*Mar.*A bold word from *you*!*Her.* Restore him, Heaven!*Mar.*

The desperate wretch! — A Flower,
Fairest of all flowers, was she once, but now
They have snapped her from the stem — Poh! let
her lie

Besoiled with mire, and let the houseless snail
Feed on her leaves. You knew her well, — ay,
there,

Old Man! you were a very lynx, — you knew
The worm was in her —

Her.

Mercy! Sir, what mean you?

Mar. You have a daughter!

Her. O that she were here!—
She hath an eye that sinks into all hearts,
And if I have in aught offended you,
Soon would her gentle voice make peace between us.

Mar. (aside.) I do believe he weeps — I could
weep too —

There is a vein of her voice that runs through his :
Even such a man my fancy bodied forth
From the first moment that I loved the maid ;
And for his sake I loved her more : these tears —
I did not think that aught was left in me
Of what I have been — yes, I thank thee, Heaven!
One happy thought has passed across my mind.
— It may not be — I am cut off from man ;
No more shall I be man, — no more shall I
Have human feelings! — (*To HERBERT.*) — Now,
for a little more
About your daughter !

Her. Troops of armed men,
Met in the roads, would bless us ; little children,
Rushing along in the full tide of play,
Stood silent as we passed them ! I have heard
The boisterous carman, in the miry road,
Check his loud whip, and hail us with mild voice,
And speak with milder voice to his poor beasts.

Mar. And whither were you going ?

Her. Learn, young Man,
To fear the virtuous, and reverence misery,
Whether too much for patience, or, like mine,
Softened till it becomes a gift of mercy.

Mar. Now, this is as it should be !

Her. I am weak ! —

My daughter does not know how weak I am ;
And, as thou seest, under the arch of heaven
Here do I stand, alone, to helplessness,
By the good God, our common Father, doomed ! —
But I had once a spirit and an arm ——

Mar. Now, for a word about your Barony :
I fancy when you left the Holy Land,
And came to — what's your title — eh ? your
claims

Were undisputed !

Her. Like a mendicant,

Whom no one comes to meet, I stood alone ; —
I murmured, — but, remembering Him who feeds
The pelican and ostrich of the desert,
From my own threshold I looked up to Heaven
And did not want glimmerings of quiet hope.
So, from the court I passed, and down the brook,
Led by its murmur, to the ancient oak
I came ; and when I felt its cooling shade,
I sat me down, and cannot but believe —
While in my lap I held my little babe
And clasped her to my heart, my heart that ached
More with delight than grief — I heard a voice
Such as by Cherith on Elijah called ;
It said, "I will be with thee." A little boy,
A shepherd-lad, ere yet my trance was gone,
Hailed us as if he had been sent from heaven,
And said, with tears, that he would be our guide :

I had a better guide, — that innocent babe, —
Her, who hath saved me, to this hour, from harm,
From cold, from hunger, penury, and death;
To whom I owe the best of all the good
I have, or wish for, upon earth, — and more
And higher far than lies within earth's bounds :
Therefore I bless her : when I think of Man,
I bless her with sad spirit, — when of God,
I bless her in the fulness of my joy !

Mar. The name of daughter in his mouth, he
prays !

With nerves so steady, that the very flies
Sit unmolested on his staff. — Innocent ! —
If he were innocent — then he would tremble
And be disturbed, as I am. (*Turning aside.*) I have
read

In story, what men now alive have witnessed,
How, when the people's mind was racked with
doubt,

Appeal was made to the great Judge : the accused
With naked feet walked over burning ploughshares.
Here is a man by Nature's hand prepared
For a like trial, but more merciful.

Why else have I been led to this bleak waste ?
Bare is it, without house or track, and destitute
Of obvious shelter, as a shipless sea.

Here will I leave him — here. — All-seeing God !
Such as *he* is, and sore perplexed as I am,
I will commit him to this final *ordeal* ! —
He heard a voice, — a shepherd-lad came to him

SCENE, *an eminence, a Beacon on the summit.*

LACY, WALLACE, LENNOX, &C., &C.

Several of the Band (confusedly). But patience !

One of the Band. Curses on that traitor,

Oswald ! —

Our Captain made a prey to foul device ! —

Len. (to WALLACE.) His tool, the wandering
beggar, made last night

A plain confession, such as leaves no doubt,
Knowing what otherwise we know too well,
That she revealed the truth. Stand by me now ;
For rather would I have a nest of vipers
Between my breastplate and my skin, than make
Oswald my special enemy, if you
Deny me your support.

Lacy. We have been fooled, —
But for the motive ?

Wal. Natures such as his
Spin motives out of their own bowels, Lacy !
I learn'd this when I was a Confessor.
I know him well ; there needs no other motive
Than that most strange incontinence in crime
Which haunts this Oswald. Power is life to him
And breath and being ; where he cannot govern,
He will destroy.

Lacy. To have been trapped like moles ! —
Yes, you are right, we need not hunt for motives :
There is no crime from which this man would
shrink ;

He recks not human law ; and I have noticed
That often, when the name of God is uttered,
A sudden blankness overspreads his face.

Len. Yet, reasoner as he is, his pride has built
Some uncouth superstition of its own.

Wal. I have seen traces of it.

Len. Once he headed
A band of Pirates in the Norway seas ;
And when the King of Denmark summoned him
To the oath of fealty, I well remember,
'T was a strange answer that he made ; he said,
" I hold of Spirits, and the Sun in heaven."

Lacy. He is no madman.

Wal. A most subtle doctor
Were that man, who could draw the line that parts
Pride and her daughter, Cruelty, from Madness,
That should be scourged, not pitied. Restless
minds,

Such minds as find amid their fellow-men
No heart that loves them, none that they can love,
Will turn perforce and seek for sympathy
In dim relation to imagined beings.

One of the Band. What if he mean to offer up
our Captain
An expiation and a sacrifice
To those infernal fiends !

Wal. Now, if the event
Should be as Lennox has foretold, then swear,
My Friends, his heart shall have as many wounds
As there are daggers here.

Lacy. What need of swearing !

One of the Band. Let us away !

Another. Away !

A third. Hark ! how the horns

Of those Scotch Rovers echo through the vale.

Lacy. Stay you behind ; and when the sun is
down,

Light up this beacon.

One of the Band. You shall be obeyed.

[*They go out together.*]

SCENE, *the Wood on the edge of the Moor.*

MARMADUKE (*alone*).

Mar. Deep, deep and vast, vast beyond human
thought,

Yet calm. — I could believe, that there was here
The only quiet heart on earth. In terror,
Remembered terror, there is peace and rest.

Enter OSWALD.

Osw. Ha ! my dear Captain.

Mar. A later meeting, Oswald,
Would have been better timed.

Osw. Alone, I see ;
You have done your duty. I had hopes, which now
I feel that you will justify.

Mar. I had fears,
From which I have freed myself.— But 't is my wish
To be alone, and therefore we must part.

Osw. Nay, then — I am mistaken. There's a
weakness

About you still; you talk of solitude —

I am your friend.

Mar. What need of this assurance
At any time? and why given now?

Osw. Because
You are now in truth my master; you have taught
me

What there is not another living man
Had strength to teach; — and therefore gratitude
Is bold, and would relieve itself by praise.

Mar. Wherefore press this on me?

Osw. Because I feel
That you have shown, and by a signal instance,
How they who would be just must seek the rule
By diving for it into their own bosoms.
To-day you have thrown off a tyranny
That lives but in the torpid acquiescence
Of our emasculated souls, the tyranny
Of the world's masters, with the musty rules
By which they uphold their craft from age to
age:

You have obeyed the only law that sense
Submits to recognize; the immediate law,
From the clear light of circumstances, flashed
Upon an independent intellect.

Henceforth new prospects open on your path;
Your faculties should grow with the demand;
I still will be your friend, will cleave to you

Through good and evil, obloquy and scorn,
Oft as they dare to follow on your steps.

Mar. I would be left alone.

Osw. (exultingly.) I know your motives!
I am not of the world's presumptuous judges,
Who damn where they can neither see nor feel,
With a hard-hearted ignorance; your struggles
I witness'd, and now hail your victory.

Mar. Spare me awhile that greeting.

Osw. It may be,
That some there are, squeamish, half-thinking
cowards,
Who will turn pale upon you, call you murderer,
And you will walk in solitude among them.
A mighty evil for a strong-built mind!
Join twenty tapers of unequal height
And light them joined, and you will see the less
How 't will burn down the taller; and they all
Shall prey upon the tallest. Solitude! —
'The eagle lives in solitude!

Mar. Even so,
The sparrow so on the house-top, and I,
The weakest of God's creatures, stand resolved
To abide the issue of my act, alone.

Osw. Now would you? and for ever? — My
young Friend,
As time advances, either we become
The prey or masters of our own past deeds.
Fellowship we *must* have, willing or no;
And if good Angels fail, slack in their duty,

Substitutes, turn our faces where we may,
Are still forthcoming; some which, though they
bear

Ill names, can render no ill services,
In recompense for what themselves required.
So meet extremes in this mysterious world,
And opposites thus melt into each other.

Mar. Time, since Man first drew breath, has
never moved

With such a weight upon his wings as now;
But they will soon be lightened.

Osw.

Ay, look up —

Cast round you your mind's eye, and you will learn
Fortitude is the child of Enterprise:
Great actions move our admiration, chiefly
Because they carry in themselves an earnest
That we can suffer greatly.

Mar.

Very true.

Osw. Action is transitory — a step, a blow,
The motion of a muscle — this way or that —
'T is done, and in the after-vacancy
We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed:
Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark,
And shares the nature of infinity.

Mar. Truth, — and I feel it.

Osw.

What! if you had bid

Eternal farewell to unmingled joy
And the light dancing of the thoughtless heart;
It is the toy of fools, and little fit
For such a world as this. The wise abjure

All thoughts whose idle composition lives
In the entire forgetfulness of pain.

— I see I have disturbed you.

Mar.

By no means.

Osw. Compassion ! — pity ! — pride can do with-
out them ;

And what if you should never know them more ! —

He is a puny soul who, feeling pain,
Finds ease because another feels it too.

If e'er I open out this heart of mine
It shall be for a nobler end, — to teach
And not to purchase puling sympathy.

— Nay, you are pale.

Mar.

It may be so.

Osw.

Remorse, —

It cannot live with thought ; think on, think on,
And it will die. What ! in this universe,
Where the least things control the greatest, where
The faintest breath that breathes can move a world ;
What ! feel remorse, where, if a cat had sneezed,
A leaf had fallen, the thing had never been
Whose very shadow gnaws us to the vitals.

Mar. Now, whither are you wandering ? That
a man

So used to suit his language to the time,
Should thus so widely differ from himself, —
It is most strange.

Osw.

Murder ! — what's in the word ! —

I have no cases by me ready made
To fit all deeds. Carry him to the Camp ! —

A shallow project ; — you of late have seen
 More deeply, taught us that the institutes
 Of Nature, by a cunning usurpation
 Banished from human intercourse, exist
 Only in our relations to the brutes
 That make the fields their dwelling. If a snake
 Crawl from beneath our feet, we do not ask
 A license to destroy him : our good governors
 Hedge in the life of every pest and plague
 That bears the shape of man ; and for what purpose,

But to protect themselves from extirpation ?
 This flimsy barrier you have overleaped.

Mar. My office is fulfilled, — the man is now
 Delivered to the Judge of all things.

Osw. Dead !

Mar. I have borne my burden to its destined
 end.

Osw. This instant we 'll return to our Compan-
 ions ; —

O how I long to see their faces again !

*Enter IDONEA with Pilgrims who continue their
 journey.*

Idon. (after some time.) What, Marmaduke !
 now thou art mine for ever.

And Cswald, too ! (To MARMADUKE.) On will
 we to my father

With the glad tidings which this day hath brought ;
 We 'll go together, and, such proof received

Of his own rights restored, his gratitude
To God above will make him feel for ours.

Osw. I interrupt you?

Idon. Think not so.

Mar. Idonea,
That I should ever live to see this moment!

Idon. Forgive me. — Oswald knows it all, — he
knows,

Each word of that unhappy letter fell
As a blood-drop from my heart.

Osw. 'T was even so.

Mar. I have much to say, but for whose ear? —
not thine.

Idon. Ill can I bear that look. — Plead for me,
Oswald!

You are my father's friend.

(*To MARMADUKE.*) Alas! you know not,
And never *can* you know, how much he loved me.
Twice had he been to me a father, twice
Had given me breath, and was not I to be
His daughter, once his daughter? could I withstand
His pleading face, and feel his clasping arms,
And hear his prayer that I would not forsake him
In his old age — [*Hides her face.*]

Mar. Patience! — Heaven grant me patience!
She weeps, she weeps! — *my* brain shall burn for
hours

Ere *I* can shed a tear.

Idon. I was a woman;
And, balancing the hopes that are the dearest

To womankind with duty to my father,
 I yielded up those precious hopes, which naught
 On earth could else have wrested from me; — if
 erring,

O, let me be forgiven !

Mar. *I do forgive thee.*

Idon. But take me to your arms; — this breast,
 alas !

It throbs, and you have a heart that does not
 feel it.

Mar. (exultingly.) She is innocent.

[He embraces her.]

Osw. (aside.) Were I a moralist,
 I should make wondrous revolution here ;
 It were a quaint experiment to show
 The beauty of truth — *[Addressing them.]*

I see I interrupt you ;

I shall have business with you, Marmaduke ;
 Follow me to the Hostel. *[Exit OSWALD.]*

Idon. Marmaduke,
 This is a happy day. My father soon
 Shall sun himself before his native doors ;
 The lame, the hungry, will be welcome there.
 No more shall he complain of wasted strength,
 Of thoughts that fail, and a decaying heart ;
 His good works will be balm and life to him.

Mar. This is most strange ! — I know not what
 it was,
 But here was something which most plainly said,
 That thou wert innocent.

Idon. How innocent! —
O heavens! you've been deceived.

Mar. Thou art a woman,
To bring perdition on the universe.

Idon. Already I've been punished to the height
Of my offence. [*Smiling affectionately.*

I see you love me still,
The labors of my hand are still your joy;
Bethink you of the hour when on your shoulder
I hung this belt.

[*Pointing to the belt on which was suspended*
HERBERT'S scrip.

Mar. Mercy of Heaven! [*Sinks.*

Idon. What ails you! [*Distractedly.*

Mar. The scrip that held his food, and I forgot
To give it back again!

Idon. What mean your words?

Mar. I know not what I said, — all may be well.

Idon. That smile had life in it!

Mar. This road is perilous;
I will attend you to a hut that stands
Near the wood's edge: rest there to-night, I pray
you:

For me, I have business, as you heard, with Os-
wald,

But will return to you by break of day. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE, *A desolate prospect — a ridge of rocks — a Chapel on the summit of one. — Moon behind the rocks — night stormy — irregular sound of a bell. — HERBERT enters exhausted.*

Her. That Chapel-bell in mercy seemed to guide me,

But now it mocks my steps ; its fitful stroke
Can scarcely be the work of human hands.
Hear me, ye men, upon the cliffs, if such
There be who pray nightly before the Altar.
O that I had but strength to reach the place !
My Child — my Child — dark — dark — I faint
— this wind —

These stifling blasts — God help me !

Enter ELDRED.

Eld. Better this bare rock,
Though it were tottering over a man's head,
Than a tight case of dungeon walls for shelter
From such rough dealing.

[*A moaning voice is heard.*

Ha ! what sound is that ?
Trees creaking in the wind (but none are here)
Send forth such noises — and that weary bell !
Surely some evil Spirit abroad to-night
Is ringing it — 't would stop a Saint in prayer,

And that — what is it? never was a sound so like
A human groan. Ha! what is here? Poor
man!

Murdered! alas! speak, — speak, I am your friend:
No answer — hush — lost wretch, he lifts his hand
And lays it to his heart. (*Kneels to him.*) I
pray you speak!

What has befallen you?

Her. (feebly.) A stranger has done this,
And in the arms of a stranger I must die.

Eld. Nay, think not so: come, let me raise you
up. [*Raises him.*

This is a dismal place — well — that is well —
I was too fearful — take me for your guide
And your support — my hut is not far off.

[*Draws him gently off the stage.*

SCENE, a room in the Hostel. — MARMADUKE and
OSWALD.

Mar. But for Idonea! — I have cause to think
That she is innocent.

Osw. Leave that thought awhile,
As one of those beliefs which in their hearts
Lovers lock up as pearls, though oft no better
Than feathers clinging to their points of passion.
This day's event has laid on me the duty
Of opening out my story; you must hear it,
And without further preface. — In my youth,
Except for that abatement which is paid

By envy as a tribute to desert,
I was the pleasure of all hearts, the darling
Of every tongue, — as you are now. You've heard
That I embarked for Syria. On our voyage
Was hatched among the crew a foul conspiracy
Against my honor, in the which our Captain
Was, I believed, prime agent. The wind fell ;
We lay becalmed week after week, until
The water of the vessel was exhausted ;
I felt a double fever in my veins,
Yet rage suppressed itself ; — to a deep stillness
Did my pride tame my pride ; — for many days,
On a dead sea under a burning sky,
I brooded o'er my injuries, deserted
By man and nature ; — if a breeze had blown,
It might have found its way into my heart,
And I had been — no matter — do you mark me ?

Imperious at all times, his temper rose ;
He struck me ; and that instant had I killed him,
And put an end to his insolence, but my Comrades
Rushed in between us : then I did insist
(All hated him, and I was stung to madness)
That we should leave him there, alive ! — we did so.

Mar. And he was famished ?

Osw. Naked was the spot ;
Methinks I see it now, — how in the sun
Its stony surface glittered like a shield ;
And in that miserable place we left him,
Alone but for a swarm of minute creatures
Not one of which could help him while alive,
Or mourn him dead.

Mar. A man by men cast off,
Left without burial ! Nay, not dead nor dying,
But standing, walking, stretching forth his arms,
In all things like ourselves, but in the agony
With which he called for mercy ; and — even so —
He was forsaken ?

Osw. There is a power in sounds :
The cries he uttered might have stopped the boat
That bore us through the water —

Mar. You returned
Upon that dismal hearing, — did you not ?

Osw. Some scoffed at him with hellish mockery,
And laughed so loud, it seemed that the smooth sea
Did from some distant region echo us.

Mar. We all are of one blood, our veins are filled
At the same poisonous fountain !

Osw. 'T was an island
Only by sufferance of the winds and waves,
Which with their foam could cover it at will.
I know not how he perished ; but the calm,
The same dead calm, continued many days.

Mar. But his own crime had brought on him
this doom,
His wickedness prepared it ; these expedients
Are terrible, yet ours is not the fault.

Osw. The man was famished, and was innocent !

Mar. Impossible !

Osw. The man had never wronged me.

Mar. Banish the thought, crush it, and be at
peace.

His guilt was marked, — these things could never be
Were there not eyes that see, and for good ends,
Where ours are baffled.

Osw. I had been deceived.

Mar. And from that hour the miserable man
No more was heard of ?

Osw. I had been betrayed.

Mar. And he found no deliverance !

Osw. The Crew
Gave me a hearty welcome ; they had laid
The plot to rid themselves, at any cost,
Of a tyrannic Master whom they loathed.
So we pursued our voyage : when we landed,
The tale was spread abroad ; my power at once
Shrunk from me ; plans and schemes, and lofty
hopes, —

All vanished. I gave way — do you attend ?

Mar. The Crew deceived you?

Osw. Nay, command yourself.

Mar. It is a dismal night,— how the wind howls!

Osw. I hid my head within a Convent, there
Lay passive as a dormouse in mid-winter.
That was no life for me, — I was o'erthrown,
But not destroyed.

Mar. The proofs — you ought to have seen
The guilt—have touched it—felt it at your
heart—

As I have done.

Osw. A fresh tide of Crusaders
Drove by the place of my retreat: three nights
Did constant meditation dry my blood;
Three sleepless nights I passed in sounding on,
Through words and things, a dim and perilous way;
And, wheresoe'er I turned me, I beheld
A slavery compared to which the dungeon
And clanking chains are perfect liberty.
You understand me — I was comforted;
I saw that every possible shape of action
Might lead to good, — I saw it and burst forth
Thirsting for some of those exploits that fill
The earth for sure redemption of lost peace.

[*Marking MARMADUKE'S countenance.*

Nay, you have had the worst. Ferocity
Subsided in a moment, like a wind
That drops down dead out of a sky it vexed.
And yet I had within me evermore
A salient spring of energy; I mounted

From action up to action with a mind
That never rested, — without meat or drink
Have I lived many days, — my sleep was bound
To purposes of reason, — not a dream
But had a continuity and substance
That waking life had never power to give.

Mar. O wretched Human-kind! — Until the
mystery

Of all this world is solved, well may we envy
The worm, that, underneath a stone whose weight
Would crush the lion's paw with mortal anguish,
Doth lodge, and feed, and coil, and sleep, in safety.
Fell not the wrath of Heaven upon those traitors?

Osw. Give not to them a thought. From Pal-
estine

We marched to Syria: oft I left the camp,
When all that multitude of hearts was still,
And followed on, through woods of gloomy cedar,
Into deep chasms troubled by roaring streams;
Or from the top of Lebanon surveyed
The moonlight desert, and the moonlight sea:
In these my lonely wanderings I perceived
What mighty objects do impress their forms
To elevate our intellectual being;
And felt, if aught on earth deserves a curse,
'T is that worst principle of ill which dooms
A thing so great to perish self-consumed.
— So much for my remorse!

Mar. Unhappy man!

Osw. When from these forms I turned to con-
template

The World's opinions and her usages,
I seemed a being who had passed alone
Into a region of futurity,
Whose natural element was freedom ——

Mar.

Stop—

I may not, cannot, follow thee.

Osw.

You must.

I had been nourished by the sickly food
Of popular applause. I now perceived
That we are praised, only as men in us
Do recognize some image of themselves,
An abject counterpart of what they are,
Or the empty thing that they would wish to be.
I felt that merit has no surer test
Than obloquy ; that, if we wish to serve
The world in substance, not deceive by show,
We must become obnoxious to its hate,
Or fear disguised in simulated scorn.

Mar. I pity, can forgive, you ; but those
wretches, —

That monstrous perfidy !

Osw.

Keep down your wrath.

False Shame discarded, spurious Fame despised,
Twin sisters both of Ignorance, I found
Life stretched before me smooth as some broad way
Cleared for a monarch's progress. Priests might
spin

Their veil, but not for me, — 't was in fit place
Among its kindred cobwebs. I had been,
And in that dream had left my native land,

One of Love's simple bondsmen, — the soft chain
 Was off for ever ; and the men, from whom
 This liberation came, you would destroy :
 Join me in thanks for their blind services.

Mar. 'T is a strange aching that, when we would
 curse

And cannot. — You have betrayed me — I have
 done —

I am content — I know that he is guiltless —
 That both are guiltless, without spot or stain,
 Mutually consecrated. Poor old man !

And I had heart for this, because thou lovedst
 Her who from very infancy had been
 Light to thy path, warmth to thy blood ! — To-
 gether [Turning to OSWALD.

We propped his steps, he leaned upon us both.

Osw. Ay, we are coupled by a chain of adamant ;
 Let us be fellow-laborers, then, to enlarge
 Man's intellectual empire. We subsist
 In slavery ; all is slavery ; we receive
 Laws, but we ask not whence those laws have
 come ;

We need an inward sting to goad us on.

Mar. Have you betrayed me ? Speak to that.

Osw. The mask,

Which for a season I have stooped to wear,
 Must be cast off. — Know then that I was urged,
 (For other impulse let it pass,) was driven,
 To seek for sympathy, because I saw
 In you a mirror of my youthful self ;

I would have made us equal once again,
 But that was a vain hope. You have struck home,
 With a few drops of blood cut short the business ;
 Therein for ever you must yield to me.
 But what is done will save you from the blank
 Of living without knowledge that you live :
 Now you are suffering, — for the future day,
 'Tis his who will command it. — Think of my
 story —

Herbert is *innocent*.

Mar. (*in a faint voice, and doubtingly.*) You
 do but echo

My own wild words ?

Osw. Young Man, the seed must lie
 Hid in the earth, or there can be no harvest ;
 'Tis Nature's law. What I have done in darkness
 I will avow before the face of day.

Herbert is *innocent*.

Mar. What fiend could prompt
 This action ? Innocent ! — O breaking heart ! —
 Alive or dead, I'll find him. [*Exit.*]

Osw. Alive — perdition ! [*Exit.*]

SCENE, *the inside of a poor Cottage.*

ELEANOR and IDONEA seated.

Idon. The storm beats hard. Mercy for poor
 or rich,
 Whose heads are shelterless in such a night !

A Voice without. Holla ! to bed, good Folks,
within !

Elea.

O save us !

Idon. What can this mean ?

Elea.

Alas, for my poor husband ! —

We'll have a counting of our flocks to-morrow ;

The wolf keeps festival these stormy nights :

Be calm, sweet Lady, they are wassailers

[*The voices die away in the distance.*

Returning from their feast. — My heart beats so —

A noise at midnight does so frighten me !

Idon. Hush !

[*Listening.*

Elea.

They are gone. On such a night,

my husband,

Dragged from his bed, was cast into a dungeon,

Where, hid from me, he counted many years,

A criminal in no one's eyes but theirs —

Not even in theirs — whose brutal violence

So dealt with him.

Idon.

I have a noble friend

First among youths of knightly breeding, one

Who lives but to protect the weak or injured.

There again !

[*Listening.*

Elea. 'T is my husband's foot. Good Eldred

Has a kind heart ; but his imprisonment

Has made him fearful, and he'll never be

The man he was.

Idon.

I will retire ; — good night !

[*She goes within.*

Enter ELDRED (hides a bundle).

Eld. Not yet in bed, Eleanor!—there are stains in that frock which must be washed out.

Elea. What has befallen you?

Eld. I am belated, and you must know the cause. — (*Speaking low.*) That is the blood of an unhappy man.

Elea. Oh! we are undone for ever.

Eld. Heaven forbid that I should lift my hand against any man. Eleanor, I have shed tears to-night, and it comforts me to think of it.

Elea. Where, where is he?

Eld. I have done him no harm, but ——— It will be forgiven me; it would not have been so once.

Elea. You have not *buried* any thing? You are no richer than when you left me?

Eld. Be at peace; I am innocent.

Elea. Then God be thanked ———

[*A short pause; she falls upon his neck.*

Eld. To-night I met with an old man lying stretched upon the ground,—a sad spectacle: I raised him up, with a hope that we might shelter and restore him.

Elea. (*as if ready to run.*) Where is he? You were not able to bring him *all* the way with you; let us return, I can help you.

[*ELDRED shakes his head.*

Eld. He did not seem to wish for life: as I was struggling on, by the light of the moon I saw the stains of blood upon my clothes;—he waved his

hand, as if it were all useless ; and I let him sink again to the ground.

Elea. O that I had been by your side !

Eld. I tell you his hands and his body were cold, — how could I disturb his last moments ? he strove to turn from me, as if he wished to settle into sleep.

Elea. But, for the stains of blood —

Eld. He must have fallen, I fancy, for his head was cut ; but I think his malady was cold and hunger.

Elea. O Eldred, I shall never be able to look up at this roof in storm or fair but I shall tremble.

Eld. Is it not enough that my ill stars have kept me abroad to night till this hour ? I come home, and this is my comfort !

Elea. But did he say nothing which might have set you at ease ?

Eld. I thought he grasped my hand while he was muttering something about his child, — his daughter. — (*Starting as if he heard a noise.*) What is that ?

Elea. Eldred, you are a father.

Eld. God knows what was in my heart, and will not curse my son for my sake.

Elea. But you prayed by him ? you waited the hour of his release ?

Eld. The night was wasting fast ; I have no friend ; I am spited by the world — his wound terrified me — if I had brought him along with

me, and he had died in my arms ! —— I am sure I heard something breathing, — and this chair !

Elea. O Eldred, you will die alone. You will have nobody to close your eyes, — no hand to grasp your dying hand, — I shall be in my grave. A curse will attend us all.

Eld. Have you forgot your own troubles when I was in the dungeon ?

Elea. And you left him alive ?

Eld. Alive ! — the damps of death were upon him, — he could not have survived an hour.

Elea. In the cold, cold night.

Eld. (*in a savage tone.*) Ay, and his head was bare ; I suppose you would have had me lend my bonnet to cover it. — You will never rest till I am brought to a felon's end.

Elea. Is there nothing to be done ? Cannot we go to the Convent ?

Eld. Ay, and say at once that I murdered him !

Elea. Eldred, I know that ours is the only house upon the Waste ; let us take heart ; this man may be rich ; and could he be saved by our means, his gratitude may reward us.

Eld. 'T is all in vain.

Elea. But let us make the attempt. This old man may have a wife, and he may have children. Let us return to the spot ; we may restore him, and his eyes may yet open upon those that love him.

Eld. He will never open them more ; even

when he spoke to me, he kept them firmly sealed,
as if he had been blind.

Idon. (*rushing out.*) It is, it is, my father —

Eld. We are betrayed (*looking at IDONEA.*)

Elea. His daughter ! — God have mercy (*turn-
ing to IDONEA.*)

Idon. (*sinking down.*) Oh ! lift me up and carry
me to the place.

You are safe ; the whole world shall not harm you.

Elea. This lady is his daughter.

Eld. (*moved.*) I 'll lead you to the spot.

Idon. (*springing up.*) Alive ! — you heard him
breathe ? quick, quick — [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE, *A Wood on the edge of the Waste.*

Enter OSWALD and a Forester.

For. He leaned upon the bridge that spans the
glen,

And down into the bottom cast his eye,
That fastened there, as it would check the current.

Osw. He listened too ; did you not say he lis-
tened ?

For. As if there came such moaning from the
flood

As is heard often after stormy nights.

Osw. But did he utter nothing?

For.

See him there!

MARMADUKE *appearing*.

Mar. Buzz, buzz, ye black and winged freebooters :

That is no substance which ye settle on!

For. His senses play him false ; and see, his arms
Outspread, as if to save himself from falling ! —

Some terrible phantom I believe is now

Passing before him, such as God will not

Permit to visit any but a man

Who has been guilty of some horrid crime.

[MARMADUKE *disappears*.

Osw. The game is up ! —

For.

If it be needful, Sir,

I will assist you to lay hands upon him.

Osw. No, no, my Friend, you may pursue your
business, —

'T is a poor wretch of an unsettled mind,

Who has a trick of straying from his keepers ;

We must be gentle. Leave him to my care.

[*Exit* Forester.

If his own eyes play false with him, these freaks

Of fancy shall be quickly tamed by mine ;

The goal is reached. My master shall become

A shadow of myself, — made by myself.

SCENE, *the edge of the Moor.*

MARMADUKE and ELDRED enter from opposite sides.

Mar. (raising his eyes and perceiving ELDRED.)

In any corner of this savage waste,
Have you, good Peasant, seen a blind old man?

Eld. I heard ——

Mar. You heard him, where? when
heard him?

Eld. As you know,
The first hours of last night were rough with storm :
I had been out in search of a stray heifer ;
Returning late, I heard a moaning sound ;
Then, thinking that my fancy had deceived me,
I hurried on, when straight a second moan,
A human voice distinct, struck on my ear.
So guided, distant a few steps, I found
An aged man, and such as you describe.

Mar. You heard ! — he called you to him ? Of
all men

The best and kindest ! But where is he ? guide me,
That I may see him.

Eld. On a ridge of rocks
A lonesome Chapel stands, deserted now :
The bell is left, which no one dares remove ;
And, when the stormy wind blows o'er the peak,
It rings, as if a human hand were there
To pull the cord. I guess he must have heard it ;
And it had led him towards the precipice,

To climb up to the spot whence the sound came ;
But he had failed through weakness. From his hand
His staff had dropped, and close upon the brink
Of a small pool of water he was laid,
As if he had stooped to drink, and so remained
Without the strength to rise.

Mar. Well, well, he lives,
And all is safe : what said he ?

Eld. But few words :
He only spake to me of a dear daughter,
Who, so he feared, would never see him more ;
And of a stranger to him, one by whom
He had been sore misused ; but he forgave
The wrong and the wrong-doer. You are trou-
bled, —

Perhaps you are his son ?

Mar. The All-seeing knows
I did not think he had a living child. —
But whither did you carry him ?

Eld. He was torn,
His head was bruised, and there was blood about
him —

Mar. That was no work of mine.

Eld. Nor was it mine.

Mar. But had he strength to walk ? I could
have borne him

A thousand miles.

Eld. I am in poverty,
And know how busy are the tongues of men ;
My heart was willing, Sir, but I am one

Whose good deeds will not stand by their own light;
And, though it smote me more than worlds can tell,
I left him.

Mar. I believe that there are phantoms,
That in the shape of man do cross our path
On evil instigation, to make sport
Of our distress, — and thou art one of them !

But things substantial have so pressed on me ——

Eld. My wife and children came into my mind.

Mar. O Monster ! Monster ! there are three of
us,

And we shall howl together.

[*After a pause and in a feeble voice.*

I am deserted
At my worst need, my crimes have in a net
(*Pointing to ELDRÉD*) Entangled this poor man. —

Where was it ? where ?

[*Dragging him along.*

Eld. 'Tis needless ; spare your violence. His
daughter ——

Mar. Ay, in the word a thousand scorpions
lodge :

This old man *had* a daughter.

Eld. To the spot
I hurried back with her. — O, save me, Sir,
From such a journey ! —— There was a black tree,
A single tree ; she thought it was her father. —
O Sir, I would not see that hour again
For twenty lives. The daylight dawned, and
now —

Nay ; hear my tale, 't is fit that you should hear it —
As we approached, a solitary crow
Rose from the spot ; — the daughter clapped her
hands,

And then I heard a shriek so terrible

[MARMADUKE *shrinks back.*

The startled bird quivered upon the wing.

Mar. Dead, dead ! —

Eld. (*after a pause.*) A dismal matter, Sir, for
me,

And seems the like for you ; if 't is your wish,
I 'll lead you to his daughter ; but 't were best
That she should be prepared ; I 'll go before.

Mar. There will be need of preparation.

[ELDRED *goes off.*

Elea. (*enters.*) Master !

Your limbs sink under you, shall I support you ?

Mar. (*taking her arm.*) Woman, I 've lent my
body to the service

Which now thou takest upon thee. God forbid
That thou shouldst ever meet a like occasion
With such a purpose in thine heart as mine was.

Elea. O, why have I to do with things like these ?

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes to the door of* ELDRED'S *cottage.* —

IDONEA *seated.* — *Enter* ELDRED.

Eld. Your father, Lady, from a wilful hand
Has met unkindness ; so indeed he told me,

And you remember such was my report :
 From what has just befallen me I have cause
 To fear the very worst.

Idon. My father is dead ;

Why dost thou come to me with words like these ?

Eld. A wicked man should answer for his crimes.

Idon. Thou seest me what I am.

Eld. It was most heinous,

And doth call out for vengeance.

Idon. Do not add,

I prith'ee, to the harm thou'st done already.

Eld. Hereafter you will thank me for this service.

Hard by, a man I met, who, from plain proofs
 Of interfering Heaven, I have no doubt,
 Laid hands upon your father. Fit it were
 You should prepare to meet him.

Idon. I have nothing

To do with others ; help me to my father —

[*She turns and sees MARMADUKE leaning on
 ELEANOR, — throws herself upon his neck,
 and after some time,*

In joy I met thee, but a few hours past ;
 And thus we meet again ; one human stay
 Is left me still in thee. Nay, shake not so.

Mar. In such a wilderness, — to see no thing,
 No, not the pitying moon !

Idon. And perish so.

Mar. Without a dog to moan for him.

Idon. Think not of it,

But enter there and see him how he sleeps,
Tranquil as he had died in his own bed.

Mar. Tranquil, — why not?

Idon. O, peace!

Mar. He is at peace;

His body is at rest : there was a plot,
A hideous plot, against the soul of man :
It took effect, — and yet I baffled it,
In *some* degree.

Idon. Between us stood, I thought,
A cup of consolation, filled from heaven
For both our needs ; must I, and in thy presence,
Alone partake of it? — Beloved Marmaduke!

Mar. Give me a reason why the wisest thing
That the earth owns shall never choose to die,
But some one must be near to count his groans.
The wounded deer retires to solitude,
And dies in solitude : all things but man,
All die in solitude.

[*Moving towards the cottage door.*

Mysterious God,
If she had never lived I had not done it!

Idon. Alas! the thought of such a cruel death
Has overwhelmed him. — I must follow.

Eld. Lady!
You will do well ; (*she goes*) unjust suspicion may
Cleave to this stranger : if, upon his entering,
The dead man heave a groan, or from his side
Uplift his hand, — that would be evidence.

Elea. Shame! Eldred, shame!

Mar. (both returning.) The dead have but
one face. (*To himself.*)

And such a man, — so meek and unoffending, —
Helpless and harmless as a babe : a man,
By obvious signal to the world's protection,
Solemnly dedicated, — to decoy him ! —

Idon. O, had you seen him living ! —

Mar. I (so filled
With horror is this world) am unto thee
The thing most precious that it now contains :
Therefore through me alone must be revealed
By whom thy parent was destroyed, *Idonea* !
I have the proofs ! —

Idon. O miserable father !
Thou didst command me to bless all mankind ;
Nor to this moment have I ever wished
Evil to any living thing ; but hear me,
Hear me, ye Heavens ! — (*kneeling.*) — May ven-
geance haunt the fiend
For this most cruel murder : let him live
And move in terror of the elements ;
The thunder send him on his knees to prayer
In the open streets, and let him think he sees,
If e'er he entereth the house of God,
The roof, self-moved, unsettling o'er his head ;
And let him, when he would lie down at night,
Point to his wife the blood-drops on his pillow !

Mar. My voice was silent, but my heart hath
joined thee.

Idon. (leaning on MARMADUKE.) Left to the
mercy of that savage man !

How could he call upon his child ! — O Friend !

[*Turns to MARMADUKE.*

My faithful, true, and only comforter.

Mar. Ay, come to me and weep. (*He kisses her.*)

(*To ELDRED.*) Yes, Varlet, look,

The devils at such sights do clap their hands.

[*ELDRED retires alarmed.*

Idon. Thy vest is torn, thy cheek is deadly pale ;
Hast thou pursued the monster ?

Mar. I have found him. —

O, would that thou hadst perished in the flames !

Idon. Here art thou, then can I be desolate ?

Mar. There was a time, when this protecting hand
Availed against the mighty ; never more
Shall blessings wait upon a deed of mine.

Idon. Wild words for me to hear, for me, an
orphan,

Committed to thy guardianship by Heaven ;
And, if thou hast forgiven me, let me hope,
In this deep sorrow, trust, that I am thine
For closer care ; — here is no malady.

[*Taking his arm.*

Mar. There is a malady —

(*Striking his heart and forehead.*) And here, and
here,

A mortal malady. — I am accurst :

All nature curses me, and in my heart

Thy curse is fixed ; the truth must be laid bare.

It must be told, and borne. I am the man,

(Abused, betrayed, but how it matters not,)

Presumptuous above all that ever breathed,
 Who, casting as I thought a guilty person
 Upon Heaven's righteous judgment, did become
 An instrument of fiends. Through me, through me,
 Thy father perished.

Idon. Perished — by what mischance ?

Mar. Belovèd — if I dared, so would I call thee —
 Conflict must cease, and, in thy frozen heart,
 The extremes of suffering meet in absolute peace.

[*He gives her a letter.*]

Idon. (*reads.*) "Be not surprised if you hear that
 some signal judgment has befallen the man who
 calls himself your father ; he is now with me, as
 his signature will show : abstain from conjecture
 till you see me.

"HERBERT.

"MARMADUKE."

The writing Oswald's ; the signature my father's :
 (*Looks steadily at the paper.*) And here is yours, —
 or do my eyes deceive me ?

You have then seen my father ?

Mar. He has leaned
 Upon this arm.

Idon. You led him towards the Convent ?

Mar. That Convent was Stone-Arthur Castle.
 Thither

We were his guides. I on that night resolved
 That he should wait thy coming till the day
 Of resurrection.

Idon. Miserable woman,
 Too quickly moved, too easily giving way,

I put denial on thy suit, and hence,
 With the disastrous issue of last night,
 Thy perturbation, and these frantic words.
 Be calm, I pray thee !

Mar. Oswald——

Idon. Name him not.

Enter female Beggar.

Beg. And he is dead ! — that Moor, — how shall
 I cross it ?

By night, by day, never shall I be able
 To travel half a mile alone. — Good Lady !
 Forgive me ! — Saints forgive me ! — Had I thought
 It would have come to this ! —

Idon. What brings you hither ? speak !

Beg. (*pointing to MARMADUKE.*) This innocent
 Gentleman. Sweet heavens ! I told him
 Such tales of your dead father ! — God is my judge,
 I thought there was no harm ; but that bad man,
 He bribed me with his gold, and looked so fierce.
 Mercy ! I said I know not what — O pity me ! —
 I said, sweet Lady, you were not his daughter —
 Pity me, I am haunted ! — thrice this day
 My conscience made me wish to be struck blind ;
 And then I would have prayed, and had no voice.

Idon. (*to MARMADUKE.*) Was it my father ?
 no, no, no, for he

Was meek and patient, feeble, old, and blind,
 Helpless, and loved me dearer than his life.
 — But hear me. For *one* question, I have a heart
 That will sustain me. Did you murder him ?

Mar. No, not by stroke of arm. But learn the process :

Proof after proof was pressed upon me ; guilt
Made evident, as seemed, by blacker guilt,
Whose impious folds enwrapped even thee ; and
truth

And innocence, embodied in his looks,
His words and tones and gestures, did but serve
With me to aggravate his crimes, and heaped
Ruin upon the cause for which they pleaded.
Then pity crossed the path of my resolve :
Confounded, I looked up to Heaven, and cast,
Idonea ! thy blind father, on the ordeal
Of the bleak waste — left him — and so he died ! —

[IDONEA *sinks senseless* ; Beggar, ELEANOR,
&c. *crowd round, and bear her off.*

Why may we speak these things, and do no more ;
Why should a thrust of the arm have such a power,
And words that tell these things be heard in vain ?
She is not dead. Why ! — if I loved this woman,
I would take care she never woke again ;
But she *WILL* wake, and she will weep for me,
And say, no blame was mine — and so, poor fool,
Will waste her curses on another name.

[*He walks about distractedly.*

Enter OSWALD.

OSWALD (*to himself*). Strong to o'erturn, strong
also to build up. [To MARMADUKE
The starts and sallies of our last encounter
Were natural enough ; but that, I trust

Is all gone by. You have cast off the chains
That fettered your nobility of mind, —
Delivered heart and head!

Let us to Palestine;
'This is a paltry field for enterprise.

Mar. Ay, what shall we encounter next? This
issue, —

'T was nothing more than darkness deepening
darkness,

And weakness crowned with the impotence of
death! —

Your pupil is, you see, an apt proficient.

[*Ironically.*

Start not! — Here is another face hard by;

Come, let us take a peep at both together,

And, with a voice at which the dead will quake,

Resound the praise of your morality —

Of this too much.

[*Drawing OSWALD towards the Cottage, — stops
short at the door.*

Men are there, millions, Oswald,
Who with bare hands would have plucked out thy
heart

And flung it to the dogs: but I am raised

Above, or sunk below, all further sense

Of provocation. Leave me, with the weight

Of that old man's forgiveness on thy heart,

Pressing as heavily as it doth on mine.

Coward I have been; know, there lies not now

Within the compass of a mortal thought

A deed that I would shrink from ;—but to endure,

That is my destiny. May it be thine :

Thy office, thy ambition, be henceforth

To feed remorse, to welcome every sting

Of penitential anguish, yea, with tears.

When seas and continents shall lie between us —

The wider space the better — we may find

In such a course fit links of sympathy,

An incommunicable rivalship

Maintained, for peaceful ends beyond our view.

[*Confused voices.* — *Several of the Band enter, rush upon OSWALD, and seize him.*

One of them. I would have dogged him to the jaws of hell —

Osw. Ha! is it so! — That vagrant Hag! —
this comes

Of having left a thing like her alive! [*Aside.*

Several voices. Despatch him!

Osw. If I pass beneath a rock

And shout, and, with the echo of my voice,

Bring down a heap of rubbish, and it crush me,

I die without dishonor. Famished, starved,

A Fool and Coward blended to my wish!

[*Smiles scornfully and exultingly at MARMADUKE.*

Wal. 'Tis done! (*stabs him.*)

Another of the band. The ruthless traitor!

Mar.

A rash deed! —

With that reproof I do resign a station

Of which I have been proud.

Wil. (*approaching MARMADUKE.*) O my poor Master!

Mar. Discerning Monitor, my faithful Wilfred, Why art thou here? [*Turning to WALLACE.*

Wallace, upon these Borders, Many there be whose eyes will not want cause To weep that I am gone. Brothers in arms! Raise on that dreary Waste a monument That may record my story : nor let words — Few must they be, and delicate in their touch As light itself — be there withheld from her Who, through most wicked arts, was made an orphan

By one who would have died a thousand times, To shield her from a moment's harm. To you, Wallace and Wilfred, I commend the lady, By lowly nature reared, as if to make her In all things worthier of that noble birth, Whose long suspended rights are now on the eve Of restoration : with your tenderest care Watch over her, I pray — sustain her ——

Several of the Band (eagerly). Captain.

Mar. No more of that; in silence hear my doom; A hermitage has furnished fit relief To some offenders; other penitents, Less patient in their wretchedness, have fallen, Like the old Roman, on their own sword's point. They had their choice : a wanderer *must I* go, The spectre of that innocent man my guide. No human ear shall ever hear me speak ;

No human dwelling ever give me food,
Or sleep, or rest : but, over waste and wild,
In search of nothing, that this earth can give,
But expiation, will I wander on —
A man by pain and thought compelled to live,
Yet loathing life — till anger is appeased
In Heaven, and Mercy gives me leave to die.

1795-6.

POEMS REFERRING TO THE PERIOD
OF CHILDHOOD.

I.

MY heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky :
So was it when my life began ;
So is it now I am a man ;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die !
The Child is father of the Man ;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

1804.

II.

TO A BUTTERFLY.

STAY near me ; do not take thy flight !
A little longer stay in sight !
Much converse do I find in thee,
Historian of my infancy !
Float near me ; do not yet depart !

Dead times revive in thee :
Thou bring'st, gay creature as thou art !
A solemn image to my heart,
My father's family !

Oh ! pleasant, pleasant were the days,
The time, when, in our childish plays,
My sister Emmeline and I
Together chased the butterfly !
A very hunter did I rush
Upon the prey : — with leaps and springs
I followed on from brake to bush ;
But she, God love her ! feared to brush
The dust from off its wings.

1801

III.

THE SPARROW'S NEST.

BEHOLD, within the leafy shade,
Those bright blue eggs together laid !
On me the chance-discovered sight
Gleamed like a vision of delight.
I started, — seeming to espy
The home and sheltered bed,
The Sparrow's dwelling, which, hard by
My Father's house, in wet or dry,
My sister Emmeline and I
Together visited.

She looked at it and seemed to fear it ;
 Dreading, tho' wishing, to be near it :
 Such heart was in her, being then
 A little Prattler among men.
 The Blessing of my later years
 Was with me when a boy :
 She gave me eyes, she gave me ears ;
 And humble cares, and delicate fears ;
 A heart, the fountain of sweet tears ;
 And love, and thought, and joy.

1801.

IV.

FORESIGHT.

THAT is work of waste and ruin —
 Do as Charles and I are doing !
 Strawberry-blossoms, one and all,
 We must spare them — here are many :
 Look at it — the flower is small,
 Small and low, though fair as any :
 Do not touch it ! summers two
 I am older, Anne, than you.

Pull the primrose, sister Anne !
 Pull as many as you can.
 — Here are daisies, take your fill ;
 Pansies, and the cuckoo-flower :

Of the lofty daffodil
Make your bed, or make your bower ;
Fill your lap, and fill your bosom ;
Only spare the strawberry-blossom !

Primroses, the Spring may love them,
Summer knows but little of them ;
Violets, a barren kind,
Withered on the ground must lie ;
Daisies leave no fruit behind
When the pretty flowerets die ;
Pluck them, and another year
As many will be blowing here.

God has given a kindlier power
To the favored strawberry-flower.
Hither soon as Spring is fled
You and Charles and I will walk ;
Lurking berries, ripe and red,
Then will hang on every stalk,
Each within its leafy bower ;
And for that promise spare the flower !

1802.

V.CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHILD THREE
YEARS OLD.

LOVING she is, and tractable, though wild ;
And Innocence hath privilege in her

To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes ;
And feats of cunning ; and the pretty round
Of trespasses, affected to provoke
Mock-chastisement and partnership in play.
And, as a fagot sparkles on the hearth,
Not less if unattended and alone,
Than when both young and old sit gathered round
And take delight in its activity ;
Even so this happy Creature of herself
Is all-sufficient ; solitude to her
Is blithe society, who fills the air
With gladness and involuntary songs.
Light are her sallies as the tripping fawn's,
Forth-startled from the fern where shelay couched ;
Unthought-of, unexpected, as the stir
Of the soft breeze ruffling the meadow-flowers,
Or from before it chasing wantonly
The many-colored images imprest
Upon the bosom of a placid lake.

1811.

VI.

ADDRESS TO A CHILD,

DURING A BOISTEROUS WINTER EVENING.

BY MY SISTER.

WHAT way does the Wind come ? What way does
he go ?
He rides over the water, and over the snow,

Through wood, and through vale ; and, o'er rocky
height

Which the goat cannot climb, takes his sounding
flight ;

He tosses about in every bare tree,
As, if you look up, you plainly may see ;
But how he will come, and whither he goes,
There's never a scholar in England knows.

He will suddenly stop in a cunning nook,
And ring a sharp 'larum ; — but, if you should look,
There's nothing to see but a cushion of snow,
Round as a pillow, and whiter than milk,
And softer than if it were covered with silk.
Sometimes he'll hide in the cave of a rock,
Then whistle as shrill as the buzzard cock ;
— Yet seek him, — and what shall you find in the
place ?

Nothing but silence and empty space ;
Save, in a corner, a heap of dry leaves,
That he's left, for a bed, to beggars or thieves !

As soon as 't is daylight to-morrow, with me
You shall go to the orchard, and then you will see
That he has been there, and made a great rout,
And cracked the branches, and strewn them about ;
Heaven grant that he spare but that one upright
twig

That looked up at the sky so proud and big
All last summer, as well you know,
Studded with apples, a beautiful show !

Hark ! over the roof he makes a pause,
And growls as if he would fix his claws
Right in the slates, and with a huge rattle
Drive them down, like men in a battle :
— But let him range round ; he does us no harm.
We build up the fire, we're snug and warm ;
Untouched by his breath, see, the candle shines
 bright,
And burns with a clear and steady light ;
Books have we to read,— but that half-stifled knell,
Alas ; 't is the sound of the eight o'clock bell.
— Come now we'll to bed ! and when we are there
He may work his own will, and what shall we
 care ?
He may knock at the door,— we'll not let him in ;
May drive at the windows,— we'll laugh at his din ;
Let him seek his own home wherever it be ;
Here's a *cozie* warm house for Edward and me.

1806.

VII.

THE MOTHER'S RETURN.

BY THE SAME.

A MONTH, sweet Little-ones, is past
Since your dear Mother went away, —
And she to-morrow will return ;
To-morrow is the happy day.

O blessed tidings ! thought of joy !
The eldest heard with steady glee ;
Silent he stood ; then laughed amain, —
And shouted, “ Mother, come to me ! ”

Louder and louder did he shout,
With witless hope to bring her near ;
“ Nay, patience ! patience, little boy !
Your tender mother cannot hear.”

I told of hills, and far-off towns,
And long, long vales to travel through ; —
He listens, puzzled, sore perplexed,
But he submits ; what can he do ?

No strife disturbs his sister's breast ;
She wars not with the mystery
Of time and distance, night and day ;
The bonds of our humanity.

Her joy is like an instinct, joy
Of kitten, bird, or summer fly ;
She dances, runs without an aim,
She chatters in her ecstasy.

Her brother now takes up the note,
And echoes back his sister's glee ;
They hug the infant in my arms,
As if to force his sympathy.

Then, settling into fond discourse,
We rested in the garden bower ;
While sweetly shone the evening sun
In his departing hour.

We told o'er all that we had done, —
Our ramblès by the swift brook's side
Far as the willow-skirted pool,
Where two fair swans together glide.

We talked of change, of winter gone,
Of green leaves on the hawthorn spray,
Of birds that build their nests and sing,
And all "since Mother went away" !

To her these tales they will repeat,
To her our new-born tribes will show,
The goslings green, the ass's colt,
The lambs that in the meadow go.

— But, see, the evening star comes forth !
To bed the children must depart ;
A moment's heaviness they feel,
A sadness at the heart :

'T is gone, — and in a merry fit
They run up stairs in gamesome race ;
I, too, infected by their mood,
I could have joined the wanton chase.

Five minutes past, — and O the change !
Asleep upon their beds they lie ;
Their busy limbs in perfect rest,
And closed the sparkling eye.

1807

VIII.

ALICE FELL ;

OR, POVERTY.

THE post-boy drove with fierce career,
For threatening clouds the moon had drowned ;
When, as we hurried on, my ear
Was smitten with a startling sound.

As if the wind blew many ways,
I heard the sound, — and more and more ;
It seemed to follow with the chaise,
And still I heard it as before.

At length I to the boy called out ;
He stopped his horses at the word,
But neither cry, nor voice, nor shout,
Nor aught else like it, could be heard.

The boy then smacked his whip, and fast
The horses scampered through the rain ;
But, hearing soon upon the blast
The cry, I bade him halt again.

Forthwith alighting on the ground,
"Whence comes," said I, "this piteous moan?"
And there a little Girl I found,
Sitting behind the chaise, alone.

"My cloak!" no other word she spake,
But loud and bitterly she wept,
As if her innocent heart would break;
And down from off her seat she leapt.

"What ails you, child?" She sobbed, "Look here!"
I saw it in the wheel entangled,
A weather-beaten rag as e'er
From any garden scarecrow dangled.

There, twisted between nave and spoke,
It hung, nor could at once be freed;
But our joint pains unloosed the cloak,
A miserable rag indeed!

"And whither are you going, child,
To-night, along these lonesome ways?"
"To Durham," answered she, half wild.
"Then come with me into the chaise."

Insensible to all relief
Sat the poor girl, and forth did send
Sob after sob, as if her grief
Could never, never have an end.

“ My child, in Durham do you dwell ? ”
She checked herself in her distress,
And said, “ My name is Alice Fell ;
I ’m fatherless and motherless.

“ And I to Durham, Sir, belong.”
Again, as if the thought would choke
Her very heart, her grief grew strong ;
And all was for her tattered cloak !

The chaise drove on ; our journey’s end
Was nigh ; and, sitting by my side,
As if she had lost her only friend
She wept, nor would be pacified.

Up to the tavern door we post ;
Of Alice and her grief I told ;
And I gave money to the host,
To buy a new cloak for the old.

“ And let it be of duffel gray,
As warm a cloak as man can sell ! ”
Proud creature was she the next day,
The little orphan, Alice Fell !

IX.

LUCY GRAY;

OR, SOLITUDE.

OFT I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see, at break of day,
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor, —
The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

“To-night will be a stormy night, —
You to the town must go;
And take a lantern, Child, to light
Your mother through the snow.”

“That, Father! will I gladly do:
’Tis scarcely afternoon, —
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon!”

At this the father raised his hook,
And snapped a fagot-band ;
He plied his work ; — and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe :
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time :
She wandered up and down ;
And many a hill did Lucy climb :
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide ;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on the hill they stood
That overlooked the moor ;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door.

They wept, — and, turning homeward, cried,
“In heaven we all shall meet” ; —
When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy’s feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill's edge
They tracked the footmarks small ;
And through the broken hawthorn-hedge,
And by the long stone-wall ;

And then an open field they crossed :
The marks were still the same ;
They tracked them on, nor ever lost ;
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank ;
And further there were none !

— Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child ;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind ;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

X.

WE ARE SEVEN.

——— A simple Child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage Girl :
She was eight years old, she said ;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad :
Her eyes were fair, and very fair ; —
Her beauty made me glad.

“ Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
How many may you be ? ”
“ How many ? Seven in all,” she said,
And wondering looked at me.

“ And where are they ? I pray you tell.”
She answered, “ Seven are we ;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

“Two of us in the churchyard lie,
My sister and my brother ;
And, in the churchyard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother.”

“You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven ! I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be.”

Then did the little Maid reply,
“Seven boys and girls are we ;
Two of us in the churchyard lie,
Beneath the churchyard tree.”

“You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive ;
If two are in the churchyard laid,
Then ye are only five.”

“Their graves are green, they may be seen,”
The little Maid replied,
“Twelve steps or more from my mother’s door,
And they are side by side.

“My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem ;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.

“And often after sunset, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

“The first that died was sister Jane ;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain ;
And then she went away.

“So in the churchyard she was laid ;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

“And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side.”

“How many are you, then,” said I,
“If they two are in heaven ?”
Quick was the little Maid’s reply,
“O Master ! we are seven.”

“But they are dead ; those two are dead !
Their spirits are in heaven !”
’T was throwing words away ; for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, “Nay, we are seven !”

XI.

THE IDLE SHEPHERD-BOYS;

OR, DUNGEON-GHYLL FORCE.*

A PASTORAL.

THE valley rings with mirth and joy ;
Among the hills the echoes play
A never, never ending song,
To welcome in the May.
The magpie chatters with delight ;
The mountain raven's youngling brood
Have left the mother and the nest ;
And they go rambling east and west
In search of their own food ;
Or through the glittering vapors dart
In very wantonness of heart.

Beneath a rock, upon the grass,
Two boys are sitting in the sun ;
Their work, if any work they have,
Is out of mind, — or done.
On pipes of sycamore they play
The fragments of a Christmas hymn ;
Or with that plant which in our dale
We call stag-horn, or fox's tail,

* *Ghyll*, in the dialect of Cumberland and Westmoreland, is a short, and for the most part a steep, narrow valley, with a stream running through it. *Force* is the word universally employed in these dialects for waterfall.

Their rusty hats they trim :
And thus, as happy as the day,
Those Shepherds wear the time away.

Along the river's stony marge
The sand-lark chants a joyous song ;
The thrush is busy in the wood,
And carols loud and strong.
A thousand lambs are on the rocks,
All newly born ! both earth and sky
Keep jubilee, and more than all,
Those boys with their green coronal ;
They never hear the cry,
That plaintive cry ! which up the hill
Comes from the depth of Dungeon-Ghyll.

Said Walter, leaping from the ground,
“ Down to the stump of yon old yew
We 'll for our whistles run a race.”
—— Away the shepherds flew ;
They leapt, — they ran, — and when they came
Right opposite to Dungeon-Ghyll,
Seeing that he should lose the prize,
“ Stop ! ” to his comrade Walter cries.
James stopped with no good will :
Said Walter then, exulting, “ Here
You 'll find a task for half a year.

“ Cross, if you dare, where I shall cross, —
Come on, and tread where I shall tread.”

The other took him at his word,
And followed as he led.
It was a spot which you may see
If ever you to Langdale go ;
Into the chasm a mighty block
Hath fallen, and made a bridge of rock :
The gulf is deep below ;
And, in a basin black and small,
Receives a lofty waterfall.

With staff in hand across the cleft
The challenger pursued his march ;
And now, all eyes and feet, hath gained
The middle of the arch.
When list ! he hears a piteous moan.
Again ! — his heart within him dies ;
His pulse is stopped, his breath is lost,
He totters, pallid as a ghost,
And, looking down, espies
A lamb, that in the pool is pent
Within that black and frightful rent.

The lamb had slipped into the stream,
And safe without a bruise or wound
The cataract had borne him down
Into the gulf profound.
His dam had seen him when he fell,
She saw him down the torrent borne ;
And, while with all a mother's love
She from the lofty rocks above

Sent forth a cry forlorn,
The lamb, still swimming round and round,
Made answer in that plaintive sound.

When he had learnt what thing it was
That sent this rueful cry, I ween
The boy recovered heart, and told
The sight which he had seen.
Both gladly now deferred their task;
Nor was there wanting other aid :
A Poet, one who loves the brooks
Far better than the sages' books,
By chance had hither strayed ;
And there the helpless lamb he found
By those huge rocks encompassed round.

He drew it from the troubled pool,
And brought it forth into the light :
The Shepherds met him with his charge,
An unexpected sight !
Into their arms the lamb they took,
Whose life and limbs the flood had spared ;
Then up the steep ascent they hied,
And placed him at his mother's side ;
And gently did the Bard
Those idle shepherd-boys upbraid,
And bade them better mind their trade.

XII.

ANECDOTE FOR FATHERS.

"Retine vim istam, falsa enim dicam, si coges." — EUSEBIUS.

I HAVE a boy of five years old ;
His face is fair and fresh to see ;
His limbs are cast in beauty's mould,
And dearly he loves me.

One morn we strolled on our dry walk,
Our quiet home all full in view,
And held such intermitted talk
As we are wont to do.

My thoughts on former pleasures ran ;
I thought of Kilve's delightful shore,
Our pleasant home when spring began,
A long, long year before.

A day it was when I could bear
Some fond regrets to entertain ;
With so much happiness to spare,
I could not feel a pain.

The green earth echoed to the feet
Of lambs that bounded through the glade,
From shade to sunshine, and as fleet
From sunshine back to shade.

Birds warbled round me, — and each trace
Of inward sadness had its charm ;
Kilve, thought I, was a favored place,
And so is Liswyn farm.

My boy beside me tripped, so slim
And graceful in his rustic dress !
And, as we talked, I questioned him,
In very idleness.

“ Now tell me, had you rather be,”
I said, and took him by the arm,
“ On Kilve’s smooth shore, by the green sea,
Or here at Liswyn farm ? ”

In careless mood he looked at me,
While still I held him by the arm,
And said, “ At Kilve I ’d rather be
Than here at Liswyn farm.”

“ Now, little Edward, say why so :
My little Edward, tell me why.” —
“ I cannot tell, I do not know.” —
“ Why, this is strange,” said I ;

“ For here are woods, hills smooth and warm :
There surely must some reason be
Why you would change sweet Liswyn farm
For Kilve by the green sea.”

At this, my boy hung down his head,
He blushed with shame, nor made reply ;
And three times to the child I said,
“ Why, Edward, tell me why ? ”

His head he raised ; there was in sight, —
It caught his eye, he saw it plain, —
Upon the house-top, glittering bright,
A broad and gilded vane.

Then did the boy his tongue unlock,
And eased his mind with this reply :
“ At Kilve there was no weather-cock ;
And that ’s the reason why.”

O dearest, dearest boy ! my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn,
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn.

1798.

XIII.

RURAL ARCHITECTURE.

THERE ’s George Fisher, Charles Fleming, and
Reginald Shore,
Three rosy-cheeked schoolboys, the highest not
more
Than the height of a counsellor’s bag ;

To the top of GREAT HOW* did it please them
to climb :

And there they built up, without mortar or lime,
A Man on the peak of the crag.

They built him of stones gathered up as they lay :
They built him and christened him all in one day,
An urchin both vigorous and hale ;
And so without scruple they called him Ralph
Jones.

Now Ralph is renowned for the length of his bones ;
The Magog of Legberthwaite dale.

Just half a week after, the wind sallied forth,
And, in anger or merriment, out of the north,
Coming on with a terrible pother,
From the peak of the crag blew the giant away.
And what did these schoolboys ? — The very next
day
They went and they built up another.

— Some little I've seen of blind boisterous works
By Christian disturbers more savage than Turks,
Spirits busy to do and undo :
At remembrance whereof my blood sometimes
will flag ;

* GREAT HOW is a single and conspicuous hill, which rises towards the foot of Thirlmere, on the western side of the beautiful dale of Legberthwaite, along the high road between Keswick and Ambleside.

Then, light-hearted Boys, to the top of the crag ;
And I'll build up a giant with you.

1801.

XIV.

THE PET LAMB.

A PASTORAL.

THE dew was falling fast, the stars began to blink ;
I heard a voice ; it said, " Drink, pretty creature,
drink ! "

And, looking o'er the hedge, before me I espied
A snow-white mountain-lamb with a Maiden at
its side.

Nor sheep nor kine were near ; the lamb was all
alone,

And by a slender cord was tethered to a stone ;
With one knee on the grass did the little Maiden
kneel,

While to that mountain-lamb she gave its evening
meal.

The lamb, while from her hand he thus his supper
took,

Seemed to feast with head and ears ; and his tail
with pleasure shook.

“Drink, pretty creature, drink!” she said, in such
a tone.

That I almost received her heart into my own.

’T was little Barbara Lewthwaite, a child of beauty
rare !

I watched them with delight, they were a lovely
pair.

Now with her empty can the Maiden turned away :
But ere ten yards were gone, her footsteps did she
stay.

Right towards the lamb she looked ; and from a
shady place

I unobserved could see the workings of her face :
If nature to her tongue could measured numbers
bring,

Thus, thought I, to her lamb that little Maid might
sing : —

“What ails thee, young One ? what ? Why pull
so at thy cord ?

Is it not well with thee ? well both for bed and
board ?

Thy plot of grass is soft, and green as grass can be ;
Rest, little young One, rest ; what is’t that aileth
thee ?

“What is it thou wouldst seek ? What is wanting
to thy heart ?

Thy limbs, are they not strong? And beautiful
thou art :

This grass is tender grass ; these flowers they have
no peers ;

And that green cord all day is rustling in thy ears !

“ If the sun be shining hot, do but stretch thy wool-
len chain,

This beech is standing by, its covert thou canst
gain ;

For rain and mountain-storms ! the like thou
need'st not fear,

The rain and storm are things that scarcely can
come here.

“ Rest, little young One, rest ; thou hast forgot the
day

When my father found thee first in places far away ;
Many flocks were on the hills, but thou wert owned
by none,

And thy mother from thy side for evermore was
gone.

“ He took thee in his arms, and in pity brought thee
home :

A blessed day for thee ! then whither wouldst
thou roam ?

A faithful nurse thou hast ; the dam that did thee
yea

Upon the mountain-tops no kinder could have been.

“Thou know’st that twice a day I have brought
thee in this can

Fresh water from the brook, as clear as ever ran,
And twice in the day, when the ground is wet with
dew,

I bring thee draughts of milk, — warm milk it is
and new.

“Thy limbs will shortly be twice as stout as they
are now,

Then I’ll yoke thee to my cart like a pony in the
plough;

My playmate thou shalt be; and when the wind
is cold,

Our hearth shall be thy bed, our house shall be thy
fold.

“It will not, will not rest! — Poor creature, can it be
That ’t is thy mother’s heart which is working so
in thee?

Things that I know not of belike to thee are dear,
And dreams of things which thou canst neither see
nor hear.

“Alas, the mountain-tops that look so green and
fair!

I’ve heard of fearful winds and darkness that come
there;

The little brooks that seem all pastime and all play,
When they are angry, roar like lions for their prey.

“Here thou need’st not dread the raven in the sky;
Night and day thou art safe, — our cottage is
hard by.

Why bleat so after me? Why pull so at thy chain?
Sleep, — and at break of day I will come to thee
again!”

— As homeward through the lane I went with lazy
feet,

This song to myself did I oftentimes repeat;
And it seemed, as I retraced the ballad line by line,
That but half of it was hers, and one half of it
was *mine*.

Again, and once again, did I repeat the song;
“Nay,” said I, “more than half to the damsel must
belong,

For she looked with such a look, and she spake
with such a tone,

That I almost received her heart into my own.”

1800.

XV.

TO H. C.

SIX YEARS OLD.

O THOU! whose fancies from afar are brought;
Who of thy words dost make a mock apparel,
And fittest to unutterable thought
The breeze-like motion and the self-born carol;

Thou faery voyager ! that dost float
In such clear water, that thy boat
May rather seem
To brood on air than on an earthly stream ;
Suspended in a stream as clear as sky,
Where earth and heaven do make one imagery ;
O blessed vision ! happy child !
Thou art so exquisitely wild,
I think of thee with many fears
For what may be thy lot in future years.

I thought of times when Pain might be thy guest,
Lord of thy house and hospitality ;
And Grief, uneasy lover ! never rest
But when she sat within the touch of thee.
O too industrious folly !
O vain and causeless melancholy !
Nature will either end thee quite ;
Or, lengthening out thy season of delight,
Preserve for thee, by individual right,
A young lamb's heart among the full-grown flocks.
What hast thou to do with sorrow,
Or the injuries of to-morrow ?
Thou art a dew-drop, which the morn brings forth,
Ill fitted to sustain unkindly shocks,
Or to be trailed along the soiling earth ;
A gem that glitters while it lives,
And no forewarning gives ;
But, at the touch of wrong, without a strife
Slips in a moment out of life.

XVI.

INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS

IN CALLING FORTH AND STRENGTHENING THE IMAGINATION IN BOYHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH.

FROM AN UNPUBLISHED POEM.

[This extract is reprinted from "The Friend."]

WISDOM and Spirit of the universe !
Thou Soul, that art the Eternity of thought !
And giv'st to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion ! not in vain,
By day or star-light, thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul ;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of Man ;
But with high objects, with enduring things,
With life and nature ; purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear, — until we recognize
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapors rolling down the valleys made
A lonely scene more lonesome ; among woods
At noon ; and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills, homeward I went

In solitude, such intercourse was mine :
 Mine was it in the fields both day and night,
 And by the waters, all the summer long.
 And in the frosty season, when the sun
 Was set, and, visible for many a mile,
 The cottage windows through the twilight blazed,
 I heeded not the summons : happy time
 It was indeed for all of us ; for me
 It was a time of rapture ! Clear and loud
 The village-clock tolled six, — I wheeled about,
 Proud and exulting like an untired horse
 That cares not for his home. — All shod with steel,
 We hissed along the polished ice, in games
 Confederate, imitative of the chase
 And woodland pleasures, — the resounding horn,
 The pack loud-chiming, and the hunted hare.
 So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
 And not a voice was idle : with the din
 Smitten, the precipices rang aloud ;
 The leafless trees and every icy crag
 Tinkled like iron ; while far-distant hills
 Into the tumult sent an alien sound
 Of melancholy, not unnoticed while the stars,
 Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
 The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired
 Into a silent bay, or sportively
 Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous throng,
 To cut across the reflex of a star ;

Image, that, flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain: and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me, — even as if the Earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round!
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a summer sea.

1799.

XVII.

THE LONGEST DAY.

ADDRESSED TO MY DAUGHTER, DORA.

LET us quit the leafy arbor,
And the torrent murmuring by;
For the sun is in his harbor,
Weary of the open sky.

Evening now unbinds the fetters
Fashioned by the glowing light;
All that breathe are thankful debtors
To the harbinger of night.

Yet by some grave thoughts attended
Eve renews her calm career ;
For the day that now is ended
Is the longest of the year.

Dora ! sport, as now thou sportest,
On this platform, light and free ;
Take thy bliss, while longest, shortest,
Are indifferent to thee !

Who would check the happy feeling
That inspires the linnet's song ?
Who would stop the swallow, wheeling
On her pinions swift and strong ?

Yet, at this impressive season,
Words which tenderness can speak
From the truths of homely reason,
Might exalt the loveliest cheek ;

And, while shades to shades succeeding
Steal the landscape from the sight,
I would urge this moral pleading,
Last forerunner of " Good night ! "

SUMMER ebbs ; — each day that follows
Is a reflux from on high,
Tending to the darksome hollows
Where the frosts of winter lie.

He who governs the creation,
In his providence, assigned
Such a gradual declination
To the life of human kind.

Yet we mark it not ; — fruits redden,
Fresh flowers blow, as flowers have blown,
And the heart is loath to deaden
Hopes that she so long hath known.

Be thou wiser, youthful Maiden !
And when thy decline shall come,
Let not flowers, or boughs fruit-laden,
Hide the knowledge of thy doom.

Now, even now, ere wrapped in slumber,
Fix thine eyes upon the sea
That absorbs time, space, and number ;
Look thou to Eternity !

Follow thou the flowing river
On whose breast are hither borne
All deceived, and each deceiver,
Through the gates of night and morn ;

Through the year's successive portals ;
Through the bounds which many a star
Marks, not mindless of frail mortals,
When his light returns from far.

Thus when thou with Time hast travelled
Toward the mighty gulf of things,
And the mazy stream unravelled
With thy best imaginings, —

Think, if thou on beauty leanest,
Think how pitiful that stay,
Did not virtue give the meanest
Charms superior to decay.

Duty, like a strict preceptor,
Sometimes frowns, or seems to frown;
Choose her thistle for thy sceptre,
While youth's roses are thy crown.

Grasp it, — if thou shrink and tremble,
Fairest damsel of the green,
Thou wilt lack the only symbol
That proclaims a genuine queen,

And insures those palms of honor
Which selected spirits wear,
Bending low before the Donor,
Lord of heaven's unchanging year!

1817.

XVIII.

THE NORMAN BOY.

HIGH on a broad, unfertile tract of forest-skirted
Down,
Nor kept by Nature for herself, nor made by man
his own,
From home and company remote and every playful
joy,
Served, tending a few sheep and goats, a ragged
Norman Boy.

Him never saw I, nor the spot ; but from an Eng-
lish Dame,
Stranger to me and yet my friend, a simple notice
came,
With suit that I would speak in verse of that se-
questered child,
Whom, one bleak winter's day, she met upon the
dreary Wild.

His flock, along the woodland's edge with relics
sprinkled o'er
Of last night's snow, beneath a sky threatening the
fall of more,
Where tufts of herbage tempted each, were busy
at their feed,
And the poor Boy was busier still, with work of
anxious heed.

There *was* he, where of branches rent and with-
ered and decayed,

For covert from the keen north wind, his hands a
hut had made.

A tiny tenement, forsooth, and frail, as needs
must be

A thing of such materials framed, by a builder
such as he.

The hut stood finished by his pains, nor seemingly
lacked aught

That skill or means of his could add, but the ar-
chitect had wrought

Some limber twigs into a Cross, well shaped with
fingers nice,

To be engrafted on the top of his small edifice.

That Cross he now was fastening there, as the
surest power and best

For supplying all deficiencies, all wants of the rude
nest

In which, from burning heat, or tempest driving
far and wide,

The innocent Boy, else shelterless, his lonely head
must hide.

That Cross belike he also raised as a standard for
the true

And faithful service of his heart in the worst that
might ensue

Of hardship and distressful fear, amid the house-
less waste

Where he, in his poor self so weak, by Providence
was placed.

— Here, Lady ! might I cease ; but nay, let *us*
before we part

With this dear holy shepherd-boy breathe a prayer
of earnest heart,

That unto him, where'er shall lie his life's ap-
pointed way,

The Cross, fixed in his soul, may prove an all-
sufficing stay.

XIX.

THE POET'S DREAM.

SEQUEL TO THE NORMAN BOY.

JUST as those final words were penned, the sun
broke out in power,

And gladdened all things ; but, as chanced, within
that very hour,

Air blackened, thunder growled, fire flashed from
clouds that hid the sky,

And, for the Subject of my Verse, I heaved a
pensive sigh.

Nor could my heart by second thoughts from
 heaviness be cleared,
For bodied forth before my eyes the cross-crowned
 hut appeared ;
And, while around it storm as fierce seemed trou-
 bling earth and air,
I saw, within, the Norman Boy kneeling alone in
 prayer.

The Child, as if the thunder's voice spake with
 articulate call,
Bowed meekly, in submissive fear, before the Lord
 of All ;
His lips were moving ; and his eyes, upraised to
 sue for grace,
With soft illumination cheered the dimness of that
 place.

How beautiful is holiness ! — what wonder if the
 sight,
Almost as vivid as a dream, produced a dream at
 night ?
It came with sleep, and showed the Boy, no cherub,
 not transformed,
But the poor ragged Thing whose ways my human
 heart had warmed.

Me had the dream equipped with wings, so I took
 him in my arms,
And lifted from the grassy floor, stilling his faint
 alarms,

And bore him high through yielding air, my debt
of love to pay,
By giving him, for both our sakes, an hour of
holiday.

I whispered, "Yet a little while, dear Child ! thou
art my own,
To show thee some delightful thing, in country or
in town.

What shall it be ? a mirthful throng ? or that holy
place and calm,
St. Denis, filled with royal tombs, or the Church
of Notre Dame ?

" St. Ouen's golden Shrine ? Or choose what else
would please thee most
Of any wonder Normandy, or all proud France,
can boast ! "

" My mother," said the Boy, " was born near to a
blessèd Tree,
The Chapel Oak of Allonville ; good Angel, show
it me ! "

On wings, from broad and steadfast poise let loose
by this reply,
For Allonville, o'er down and dale, away then did
we fly ;
O'er town and tower we flew, and fields in May's
fresh verdure drest ;
The wings they did not flag ; the Child, though
grave, was not deprest.

But who shall show, to waking sense, the gleam of
light that broke
Forth from his eyes, when first the Boy looked
down on that huge oak,
For length of days so much revered, so famous
where it stands
For twofold hallowing, — Nature's care, and work
of human hands ?

Strong as an eagle, with my charge I glided round
and round
The wide-spread boughs, for view of door, window,
and stair that wound
Gracefully up the gnarled trunk ; nor left we
unsurveyed
The pointed steeple peering forth from the centre
of the shade.

I lighted, — opened with soft touch the chapel's
iron door,
Past softly, leading in the Boy ; and, while from
roof to floor,
From floor to roof, all round his eyes the Child
with wonder cast,
Pleasure on pleasure crowded in, each livelier than
the last.

For, deftly framed within the trunk, the sanctuary
showed,
By light of lamp and precious stones, that glim-
mered here, there glowed,

Shrine, Altar, Image, Offerings hung in sign of
gratitude ;
Sight that inspired accordant thoughts ; and speech
I thus renewed :

“ Hither the Afflicted come, as thou hast heard
thy mother say,
And, kneeling, supplication make to our Lady de
la Paix ;
What mournful sighs have here been heard, and,
when the voice was stopt
By sudden pangs, what bitter tears have on this
pavement dropt !

“ Poor Shepherd of the naked Down, a favored
lot is thine,
Far happier lot, dear Boy, than brings full many
to this shrine ;
From body pains and pains of soul thou needest
no release,
Thy hours as they flow on are spent, if not in joy,
in peace.

“ Then offer up thy heart to God in thankfulness
and praise,
Give to him prayers, and many thoughts, in thy
most busy days ;
And in his sight the fragile Cross, on thy small
hut, will be
Holy as that which long hath crowned the Chapel
of this Tree ;

“ Holy as that far seen which crowns the sumptuous
Church in Rome
Where thousands meet to worship God under a
mighty Dome ;
He sees the bending multitude, he hears the choral
rites,
Yet not the less in children's hymns and lonely
prayer delights.

“ God for his service needeth not proud work of
human skill ;
They please him best who labor most to do in
peace his will :
So let us strive to live, and to our Spirits will be
given
Such wings as, when our Saviour calls, shall bear
us up to heaven.”

The Boy no answer made by words, but, so ear-
nest was his look,
Sleep fled, and with it fled the dream,— recorded
in this book,
Lest all that passed should melt away in silence
from my mind,
As visions still more bright have done, and left no
trace behind.

But oh ! that countryman of thine, whose eye,
loved Child, can see
A pledge of endless bliss in acts of early piety,

In verse, which to thy ear might come, would treat
this simple theme,
Nor leave untold our happy flight in that adventurous dream.

Alas! the dream, to thee, poor Boy! to thee from
whom it flowed,
Was nothing, scarcely can be aught, yet 't was
bounteously bestowed,
If I may dare to cherish hope that gentle eyes will
read
Not loth, and listening Little-ones, heart-touched,
their fancies feed.*

XX.

THE WESTMORELAND GIRL.

TO MY GRANDCHILDREN.

PART I.

SEEK who will delight in fable,
I shall tell you truth. A Lamb
Leapt from this steep bank to follow
'Cross the brook its thoughtless dam.

* See note.

Far and wide on hill and valley
Rain had fallen, unceasing rain,
And the bleating mother's Young-one
Struggled with the flood in vain :

But, as 'chanced, a Cottage-maiden,
(Ten years scarcely had she told,)
Seeing, plunged into the torrent,
Clasped the Lamb and kept her hold.

Whirled adown the rocky channel,
Sinking, rising, on they go,
Peace and rest, as seems, before them
Only in the lake below.

Oh ! it was a frightful current
Whose fierce wrath the Girl had braved ;
Clap your hands with joy, my Hearers,
Shout in triumph, both are saved ; —

Saved by courage that with danger
Grew, by strength the gift of love,
And belike a guardian angel
Came with succor from above.

PART II.

Now, to a maturer Audience,
Let me speak of this brave Child,

Left among her native mountains
With wild Nature to run wild.

So, unwatched by love maternal,
Mother's care no more her guide,
Fared this little bright-eyed Orphan
Even while at her father's side.

Spare your blame, — remembrance makes him
Loth to rule by strict command ;
Still upon his cheek are living
Touches of her infant hand, —

Dear caresses given in pity,
Sympathy that soothed his grief,
As the dying mother witnessed
To her thankful mind's relief.

Time passed on ; the Child was happy,
Like a spirit of air she moved,
Wayward, yet by all who knew her
For her tender heart beloved.

Scarcely less than sacred passions,
Bred in house, in grove, and field,
Link her with the inferior creatures,
Urge her powers their rights to shield.

Anglers, bent on reckless pastime,
Learn how she can feel alike

Both for tiny, harmless minnow
And the fierce and sharp-toothed pike.

Merciful protectress, kindling
Into anger or disdain,
Many a captive hath she rescued,
Others saved from lingering pain.

Listen yet awhile, — with patience
Hear the homely truths I tell, —
She in Grasmere's old church-steeple
Tolled this day the passing-bell.

Yes, the wild Girl of the mountains
To their echoes gave the sound,
Notice punctual as the minute,
Warning solemn and profound.

She, fulfilling her sire's office,
Rang alone the far-heard knell,
Tribute, by her hand, in sorrow,
Paid to One who loved her well.

When his spirit was departed,
On that service she went forth ;
Nor will fail the like to render
When his corse is laid in earth.

What then wants the Child to temper,
In her breast, unruly fire,

To control the froward impulse
And restrain the vague desire ?

Easily a pious training
And a steadfast outward power
Would supplant the weeds, and cherish,
In their stead, each opening flower

Thus the fearless Lamb-deliverer,
Woman-grown, meek-hearted, sage,
May become a blest example
For her sex, of every age.

Watchful as a wheeling eagle,
Constant as a soaring lark,
Should the country need a heroine,
She might prove our Maid of Arc.

Leave that thought ; and here be uttered
Prayer that Grace divine may raise
Her humane, courageous spirit
Up to heaven, through peaceful ways.

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFEC- TIONS.

I.

THE BROTHERS.

“THESE Tourists, Heaven preserve us! needs must
live

A profitable life : some glance along,
Rapid and gay, as if the earth were air,
And they were butterflies to wheel about
Long as the summer lasted : some, as wise,
Perched on the forehead of a jutting crag,
Pencil in hand and book upon the knee,
Will look and scribble, scribble on and look,
Until a man might travel twelve stout miles,
Or reap an acre of his neighbor's corn.
But, for that moping Son of Idleness,
Why can he tarry *yonder* ? — In our church-yard
Is neither epitaph nor monument,
Tombstone nor name, — only the turf we tread
And a few natural graves.”

To Jane, his wife,
Thus spake the homely Priest of Ennerdale.

It was a July evening ; and he sat
Upon the long stone seat beneath the eaves
Of his old cottage, — as it chanced, that day,
Employed in winter's work. Upon the stone
His wife sat near him, teasing matted wool,
While, from the twin cards toothed with glittering
wire,

He fed the spindle of his youngest child,
Who, in the open air, with due accord
Of busy hands and back-and-forward steps
Her large, round wheel was turning. Towards the
field

In which the Parish Chapel stood alone,
Girt round with a bare ring of mossy wall,
While half an hour went by, the Priest had sent
Many a long look of wonder : and at last,
Risen from his seat, beside the snow-white ridge
Of carded wool which the old man had piled
He laid his implements with gentle care,
Each in the other locked ; and down the path
That from his cottage to the churchyard led
He took his way, impatient to accost
The Stranger, whom he saw still lingering there.

'T was one well known to him in former days,
A Shepherd-lad ; who ere his sixteenth year
Had left that calling, tempted to intrust
His expectations to the fickle winds
And perilous waters ; with the mariners
A fellow-mariner ; — and so had fared

Through twenty seasons ; but he had been reared
 Among the mountains, and he in his heart
 Was half a shepherd on the stormy seas.
 Oft in the piping shrouds had Leonard heard
 The tones of waterfalls, and inland sounds
 Of caves and trees : — and, when the regular wind
 Between the tropics filled the steady sail,
 And blew with the same breath through days and
 weeks,

Lengthening invisibly its weary line
 Along the cloudless main, he, in those hours
 Of tiresome indolence, would often hang
 Over the vessel's side, and gaze and gaze ;
 And, while the broad blue wave and sparkling foam
 Flashed round him images and hues that wrought
 In union with the employment of his heart,
 He, thus by feverish passion overcome,
 Even with the organs of his bodily eye,
 Below him, in the bosom of the deep,
 Saw mountains ; saw the forms of sheep that
 grazed
 On verdant hills, — with dwellings among trees,
 And shepherds clad in the same country gray
 Which he himself had worn.*

And now, at last,
 From perils manifold, with some small wealth

* This description of the Calenture is sketched from an imperfect recollection of an admirable one in prose, by Mr. Gilbert, author of the Hurricane.

Acquired by traffic 'mid the Indian Isles,
To his paternal home he is returned,
With a determined purpose to resume
The life he had lived there ; both for the sake
Of many darling pleasures, and the love
Which to an only brother he has borne
In all his hardships, since that happy time
When, whether it blew foul or fair, they two
Were brother-shepherds on their native hills.
— They were the last of all their race : and now,
When Leonard had approached his home, his heart
Failed in him ; and, not venturing to inquire
Tidings of one so long and dearly loved,
He to the solitary churchyard turned,
That, as he knew in what particular spot
His family were laid, he thence might learn
If still his Brother lived, or to the file
Another grave was added. — He had found
Another grave, — near which a full half-hour
He had remained ; but, as he gazed, there grew
Such a confusion in his memory,
That he began to doubt, and even to hope
That he had seen this heap of turf before, —
That it was not another grave, but one
He had forgotten. He had lost his path,
As up the vale, that afternoon, he walked
Through fields which once had been well known
to him :

And O what joy this recollection now
Sent to his heart ! he lifted up his eyes,

And, looking round, imagined that he saw
 Strange alteration wrought on every side
 Among the woods and fields, and that the rocks
 And everlasting hills themselves were changed.

By this the Priest, who down the field had come,
 Unseen by Leonard, at the churchyard gate
 Stopped short, — and thence, at leisure, limb by
 limb,

Perused him with a gay complacency.
 Ay, thought the Vicar, smiling to himself,
 'Tis one of those who needs must leave the path
 Of the world's business to go wild alone :
 His arms have a perpetual holiday ;
 The happy man will creep about the fields,
 Following his fancies by the hour, to bring
 Tears down his cheek, or solitary smiles
 Into his face, until the setting sun
 Write fool upon his forehead. — Planted thus
 Beneath a shed that overarched the gate
 Of this rude churchyard, till the stars appeared
 The good man might have communed with him-
 self,

But that the Stranger, who had left the grave,
 Approached ; he recognized the Priest at once,
 And, after greetings interchanged, and given
 By Leonard to the Vicar as to one
 Unknown to him, this dialogue ensued.

Leonard. You live, Sir, in these dales, a quiet
 life :

Your years make up one peaceful family ;
And who would grieve and fret, if, welcome come
And welcome gone, they are so like each other,
They cannot be remembered ? Scarce a funeral
Comes to this churchyard once in eighteen months ;
And yet some changes must take place among you :
And you, who dwell here, even among these rocks
Can trace the finger of mortality,
And see, that with our threescore years and ten
We are not all that perish. — I remember,
(For many years ago I passed this road,)
There was a foot-way all along the fields
By the brook-side, — 't is gone ! — and that dark
cleft !

To me it does not seem to wear the face
Which then it had !

Priest. Nay, Sir, for aught I know,
That chasm is much the same —

Leonard. But, surely, yonder —

Priest. Ay, there, indeed, your memory is a
friend

That does not play you false. — On that tall pike
(It is the loneliest place of all these hills)
There were two springs which bubbled side by side,
As if they had been made that they might be
Companions for each other : the huge crag
Was rent with lightning, — one hath disappeared ;
The other, left behind, is flowing still.
For accidents and changes such as these,
We want not store of them ; — a water-spout

Will bring down half a mountain ; — what a feast
 For folks that wander up and down like you,
 To see an acre's breadth of that wide cliff
 One roaring cataract ! A sharp May storm
 Will come with loads of January snow,
 And in one night send twenty score of sheep
 To feed the ravens ; or a shepherd dies
 By some untoward death among the rocks :
 The ice breaks up and sweeps away a bridge ;
 A wood is felled. And then for our own homes !
 A child is born or christened, a field ploughed,
 A daughter sent to service, a web spun,
 The old house-clock is decked with a new face ;
 And hence, so far from wanting facts or dates
 To chronicle the time, we all have here
 A pair of diaries, — one serving, Sir,
 For the whole dale, and one for each fireside. —
 Yours was a stranger's judgment : for historians,
 Commend me to these valleys !

Leonard. Yet your churchyard
 Seems, if such freedom may be used with you,
 To say that you are heedless of the past :
 An orphan could not find his mother's grave :
 Here's neither head nor foot-stone, plate of brass,
 Cross-bones nor skull, — type of our earthly state
 Nor emblem of our hopes : the dead man's home
 Is but a fellow to that pasture-field.

Priest. Why, there, Sir, is a thought that's new
 to me !

The stone-cutters, 't is true, might beg their bread

If every English churchyard were like ours ;
Yet your conclusion wanders from the truth :
We have no need of names and epitaphs ;
We talk about the dead by our firesides.
And then, for our immortal part ! *we* want
No symbols, Sir, to tell us that plain tale :
The thought of death sits easy on the man
Who has been born and dies among the mountains.

Leonard. Your Dalesmen, then, do in each
other's thoughts
Possess a kind of second life : no doubt
You, Sir, could help me to the history
Of half these graves ?

Priest. For eightscore winters past,
With what I've witnessed, and with what I've
heard,
Perhaps I might ; and, on a winter evening,
If you were seated at my chimney's nook,
By turning o'er these hillocks one by one,
We two could travel, Sir, through a strange round ;
Yet all in the broad highway of the world.
Now there's a grave, — your foot is half upon it, —
It looks just like the rest ; and yet that man
Died broken-hearted.

Leonard. 'T is a common case.
We'll take another : who is he that lies
Beneath yon ridge, the last of those three graves ?
It touches on that piece of native rock
Left in the churchyard wall.

Priest.

That's Walter Ewbank.

He had as white a head and fresh a cheek
 As ever were produced by youth and age
 Engendering in the blood of hale fourscore.
 Through five long generations had the heart
 Of Walter's forefathers o'erflowed the bounds
 Of their inheritance, that single cottage —
 You see it yonder — and those few green fields.
 They toiled and wrought, and still, from sire to son,
 Each struggled, and each yielded as before
 A little, — yet a little, — and old Walter,
 They left to him the family heart, and land
 With other burdens than the crop it bore.
 Year after year the old man still kept up
 A cheerful mind, — and buffeted with bond,
 Interest, and mortgages ; at last he sank,
 And went into his grave before his time.
 Poor Walter ! whether it was care that spurred him
 God only knows, but to the very last
 He had the lightest foot in Ennerdale :
 His pace was never that of an old man :
 I almost see him tripping down the path
 With his two grandsons after him. — But you,
 Unless our Landlord be your host to-night,
 Have far to travel, — and on these rough paths
 Even in the longest day of midsummer —

Leonard. But those two Orphans !

Priest. Orphans ! — Such they were, —
 Yet not while Walter lived : — for, though their
 parents

Lay buried side by side as now they lie,
The old man was a father to the boys,
Two fathers in one father: and if tears,
Shed when he talked of them where they were not,
And hauntings from the infirmity of love,
Are aught of what makes up a mother's heart,
This old man, in the day of his old age,
Was half a mother to them. — If you weep, Sir,
To hear a stranger talking about strangers,
Heaven bless you when you are among your kin-
dred !

Ay,—you may turn that way, — it is a grave
Which will bear looking at.

Leonard. These boys, — I hope
They loved this good old man?

Priest. They did,—and truly :

But that was what we almost overlooked,
They were such darlings of each other. Yes,
Though from the cradle they had lived with Walter,
The only kinsman near them, and though he
Inclined to both by reason of his age,
With a more fond, familiar tenderness,
They, notwithstanding, had much love to spare,
And it all went into each other's hearts.
Leonard, the elder by just eighteen months,
Was two years taller : 't was a joy to see,
'To hear, to meet them ! — From their house the
school

Is distant three short miles, and in the time
Of storm and thaw, when every watercourse

And unbridged stream, such as you may have
noticed

Crossing our roads at every hundred steps,
Was swollen into a noisy rivulet,
Would Leonard then, when elder boys remained
At home, go staggering through the slippery fords,
Bearing his brother on his back. I have seen him,
On windy days, in one of those stray brooks,
Ay, more than once I have seen him, mid-leg deep,
Their two books lying both on a dry stone,
Upon the hither side : and once I said,
As I remember, looking round these rocks
And hills on which we all of us were born,
That God who made the great book of the world
Would bless such piety —

Leonard.

It may be then —

Priest. Never did worthier lads break English
bread ;

The very brightest Sunday Autumn saw,
With all its mealy clusters of ripe nuts,
Could never keep those boys away from church,
Or tempt them to an hour of Sabbath breach.
Leonard and James ! I warrant, every corner
Among these rocks, and every hollow place
That venturous foot could reach, to one or both
Was known as well as to the flowers that grow
there.

Like roebucks they went bounding o'er the hills ;
They played like two young ravens on the crags :
Then they could write, ay and speak too, as well

As many of their betters ; — and for Leonard
The very night before he went away,
In my own house I put into his hand
A Bible, and I 'd wager house and field
That, if he be alive, he has it yet.

Leonard. It seems, these brothers have not lived
to be

A comfort to each other —

Priest. That they might
Live to such end is what both old and young
In this our valley all of us have wished,
And what, for my part, I have often prayed :
But Leonard —

Leonard. Then James still is left among you !

Priest. 'Tis of the elder brother I am speaking :
They had an uncle ; — he was at that time
A thriving man, and trafficked on the seas :
And, but for that same uncle, to this hour
Leonard had never handled rope or shroud :
For the boy loved the life which we lead here ;
And though of unripe years, a stripling only,
His soul was knit to this his native soil.
But, as I said, old Walter was too weak
To strive with such a torrent ; when he died,
The estate and house were sold ; and all their sheep,
A pretty flock, and which, for aught I know,
Had clothed the Ewbanks for a thousand years.
Well — all was gone, and they were destitute,
And Leonard, chiefly for his brother's sake,
Resolved to try his fortune on the seas.

Twelve years are past since we had tidings from
him.

If there were one among us who had heard
That Leonard Ewbank was come home again,
From the Great Gavel,* down by Leeza's banks,
And down the Enna, far as Egremont,
The day would be a joyous festival ;
And those two bells of ours, which there you see,
Hanging in the open air — But, O good Sir !
This is sad talk, — they 'll never sound for him,
Living or dead. — When last we heard of him,
He was in slavery among the Moors
Upon the Barbary coast. — 'T was not a little
That would bring down his spirit ; and no doubt,
Before it ended in his death, the Youth
Was sadly crossed. — Poor Leonard ! when we
parted,
He took me by the hand, and said to me,
If e'er he should grow rich, he would return,
To live in peace upon his father's land,
And lay his bones among us.

Leonard.

If that day
Should come, 't would needs be a glad day for him ;

* The Great Gavel, so called, I imagine, from its resemblance to the gable end of a house, is one of the highest of the Cumberland Mountains. It stands at the head of the several vales of Ennerdale, Wastdale, and Borrowdale.

The Leeza is a river which flows into the Lake of Ennerdale : on issuing from the lake, it changes its name, and is called the End, Eyne, or Enna. It falls into the sea a little below Egremont.

He would himself, no doubt, be happy then
As any that should meet him —

Priest. Happy! Sir —

Leonard. You said his kindred all were in their
graves,

And that he had one Brother —

Priest. That is but

A fellow-tale of sorrow. From his youth
James, though not sickly, yet was delicate;
And Leonard being always by his side
Had done so many offices about him,
That, though he was not of a timid nature,
Yet still the spirit of a mountain-boy
In him was somewhat checked; and when his
Brother

Was gone to sea, and he was left alone,
The little color that he had was soon
Stolen from his cheek; he dropped, and pined, and
pined —

Leonard. But these are all the graves of full-
grown men!

Priest. Ay, Sir, that passed away: we took him
to us;

He was the child of all the dale; — he lived
Three months with one, and six months with another;
And wanted neither food, nor clothes, nor love:
And many, many happy days were his.
But, whether blithe or sad, 't is my belief
His absent Brother still was at his heart:
And when he dwelt beneath our roof, we found

(A practice till this time unknown to him)
 That often, rising from his bed at night,
 He in his sleep would walk about, and sleeping
 He sought his brother Leonard. — You are moved!
 Forgive me, Sir : before I spoke to you,
 I judged you most unkindly.

Leonard.

But this Youth,

How did he die at last ?

Priest.

One sweet May-morning

(It will be twelve years since when Spring returns)
 He had gone forth among the new-dropped lambs,
 With two or three companions, whom their course
 Of occupation led from height to height
 Under a cloudless sun, — till he, at length,
 Through weariness, or, haply, to indulge
 The humor of the moment, lagged behind.
 You see yon precipice ; — it wears the shape
 Of a vast building made of many crags ;
 And in the midst is one particular rock
 That rises like a column from the vale,
 Whence by our shepherds it is called THE PILLAR.
 Upon its airy summit crowned with heath,
 The loiterer, not unnoticed by his comrades,
 Lay stretched at ease ; but, passing by the place
 On their return, they found that he was gone.
 No ill was feared ; till one of them by chance
 Entering, when evening was far spent, the house
 Which at that time was James's home, there learned
 That nobody had seen him all that day :
 The morning came, and still he was unheard of :

The neighbors were alarmed, and to the brook
Some hastened ; some ran to the lake : ere noon
They found him at the foot of that same rock,
Dead, and with mangled limbs. The third day after,
I buried him, poor Youth, and there he lies !

Leonard. And that then *is* his grave ! — Before
his death

You say that he saw many happy years ?

Priest. Ay, that he did —

Leonard. And all went well with him ?

Priest. If he had one, the youth had twenty homes.

Leonard. And you believe, then, that his mind
was easy ?

Priest. Yes, long before he died, he found that
time

Is a true friend to sorrow ; and unless
His thoughts were turned on Leonard's luckless
fortune,

He talked about him with a cheerful love.

Leonard. He could not come to an unhallowed
end !

Priest. Nay, God forbid ! — You recollect I
mentioned

A habit which disquietude and grief
Had brought upon him ; and we all conjectured
That, as the day was warm, he had lain down
On the soft heath, and, waiting for his comrades,
He there had fallen asleep ; that in his sleep
He to the margin of the precipice
Had walked, and from the summit had fallen
headlong :

And so no doubt he perished. When the Youth
 Fell, in his hand he must have grasp'd, we think,
 His shepherd's staff; for on that Pillar of rock
 It had been caught midway; and there for years
 It hung; — and mouldered there.

The Priest here ended. —

The Stranger would have thanked him, but he felt
 A gushing from his heart, that took away
 The power of speech. Both left the spot in silence;
 And Leonard, when they reached the churchyard
 gate,
 As the Priest lifted up the latch, turned round, —
 And, looking at the grave, he said, "My Brother!"
 The Vicar did not hear the words: and now,
 He pointed towards his dwelling-place, entreating
 That Leonard would partake his homely fare:
 The other thanked him with an earnest voice;
 But added, that, the evening being calm,
 He would pursue his journey. So they parted.

It was not long ere Leonard reached a grove
 That overhung the road: he there stopped short,
 And, sitting down beneath the trees, reviewed
 All that the Priest had said: his early years
 Were with him: his long absence, cherished hopes,
 And thoughts which had been his an hour before,
 All pressed on him with such a weight, that now
 This vale, where he had been so happy, seemed
 A place in which he could not bear to live:

So he relinquished all his purposes.
He travelled back to Egremont : and thence,
That night, he wrote a letter to the Priest,
Reminding him of what had passed between them :
And adding, with a hope to be forgiven,
That it was from the weakness of his heart
He had not dared to tell him who he was.
This done, he went on shipboard, and is now
A Seaman, a gray-headed Mariner.

1800.

II.

ARTEGAL AND ELIDURE.

(SEE THE CHRONICLE OF GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH AND
MILTON'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND.)

WHERE be the temples which, in Britain's isle,
For his paternal Gods, the Trojan raised ?
Gone like a morning dream, or like a pile
Of clouds that in cerulean ether blazed !
Ere Julius landed on her white-cliffed shore,
They sank, delivered o'er
To fatal dissolution ; and, I ween,
No vestige then was left that such had ever been.

Nathless, a British record (long concealed
In old Armorica, whose secret springs
No Gothic conqueror ever drank) revealed

The marvellous current of forgotten things ;
 How Brutus came, by oracles impelled,
 And Albion's giants quelled,
 A brood whom no civility could melt,
 " Who never tasted grace, and goodness ne'er had
 felt."

By brave Corineus aided, he subdued,
 And rooted out the intolerable kind ;
 And this too-long-polluted land imbued
 With goodly arts and usages refined ;
 Whence golden harvests, cities, warlike towers,
 And pleasure's sumptuous bowers ;
 Whence all the fixed delights of house and home,
 Friendships that will not break, and love that
 cannot roam.

O happy Britain ! region all too fair
 For self-delighting fancy to endure
 That silence only should inhabit there,
 Wild beasts, or uncouth savages impure !
 But, intermingled with the generous seed,
 Grew many a poisonous weed ;
 Thus fares it still with all that takes its birth
 From human care, or grows upon the breast of
 earth.

Hence, and how soon ! that war of vengeance waged
 By Guendolen against her faithless lord ;
 Till she, in jealous fury unassuaged,

Had slain his paramour with ruthless sword :
Then, into Severn hideously defiled,
 She flung her blameless child,
Sabrina, — vowing that the stream should bear
That name through every age, her hatred to de-
 clare.

So speaks the Chronicle, and tells of Lear
By his ungrateful daughters turned adrift.
Ye lightnings, hear his voice ! — they cannot hear,
Nor can the winds restore his simple gift.
But One there is, a Child of nature meek,
 Who comes her Sire to seek ;
And he, recovering sense, upon her breast
Leans smilingly, and sinks into a perfect rest.

There too we read of Spenser's fairy themes,
And those that Milton loved in youthful years ;
The sage enchanter Merlin's subtle schemes ;
The feats of Arthur and his knightly peers ;
Of Arthur, — who, to upper light restored,
 With that terrific sword
Which yet he brandishes for future war,
Shall lift his country's fame above the polar star !

What wonder, then, if, in such ample field
Of old tradition, one particular flower
Doth seemingly in vain its fragrance yield,
And bloom unnoticed even to this late hour ?
Now, gentle Muses, your assistance grant,

While I this flower transplant
 Into a garden stored with Poesy ;
 Where flowers and herbs unite, and haply some
 weeds be,
 That, wanting not wild grace, are from all mischief
 free !

A KING more worthy of respect and love
 Than wise Gorbonian ruled not in his day ;
 And grateful Britain prospered far above
 All neighboring countries through his righteous
 sway ;
 He poured rewards and honors on the good ;
 The oppressor he withstood ;
 And while he served the Gods with reverence due,
 Fields smiled, and temples rose, and towns and
 cities grew.

He died, whom Artegal succeeds, — his son ;
 But how unworthy of that sire was he !
 A hopeful reign, auspiciously begun,
 Was darkened soon by foul iniquity.
 From crime to crime he mounted, till at length
 The nobles leagued their strength
 With a vexed people, and the tyrant chased ;
 And on the vacant throne his worthier Brother
 placed.

From realm to realm the humbled Exile went,
 Suppliant for aid his kingdom to regain ;

In many a court, and many a warrior's tent,
He urged his persevering suit in vain.
Him, in whose wretched heart ambition failed,
Dire poverty assailed ;
And, tired with slights his pride no more could
brook,
He towards his native country cast a longing look.

Fair blew the wished-for wind, — the voyage sped ;
He landed ; and, by many dangers scared,
“ Poorly provided, poorly followèd,”
To Calaterium's forest he repaired.
How changed from him who, born to highest
place,
Had swayed the royal mace,
Flattered and feared, despised yet deified,
In Troynovant, his seat by silver Thames's side !

From that wild region where the crownless King
Lay in concealment with his scanty train,
Supporting life by water from the spring,
And such chance food as outlaws can obtain,
Unto the few whom he esteems his friends
A messenger he sends ;
And from their secret loyalty requires
Shelter and daily bread, — the sum of his desires.

While he the issue waits, at early morn
Wandering by stealth abroad, he chanced to hear
A startling outcry made by hound and horn,

From which the tusky wild boar flies in fear ;
 And, scouring toward him o'er the grassy plain,
 Behold the hunter train !
 He bids his little company advance
 With seeming unconcern and steady countenance.

The royal Elidure, who leads the chase,
 Hath checked his foaming courser : — Can it be !
 Methinks that I should recognize that face,
 Though much disguised by long adversity !
 He gazed rejoicing, and again he gazed,
 Confounded and amazed. —
 “It is the king, my brother !” and, by sound
 Of his own voice confirmed, he leaps upon the
 ground.

Long, strict, and tender was the embrace he gave,
 Feebly returned by daunted Artegal ;
 Whose natural affection doubts enslave,
 And apprehensions dark and criminal.
 Loth to restrain the moving interview,
 The attendant lords withdrew ;
 And, while they stood upon the plain apart,
 Thus Elidure, by words, relieved his struggling
 heart.

“By heavenly Powers conducted, we have met ;
 — O Brother ! to my knowledge lost so long,
 But neither lost to love, nor to regret,
 Nor to my wishes lost ; — forgive the wrong,

(Such it may seem) if I thy crown have borne,
Thy royal mantle worn :
I was their natural guardian ; and 't is just
That now I should restore what hath been held in
trust."

Awhile the astonished Artegal stood mute,
Then thus exclaimed : "To me, of titles shorn,
And stripped of power ! me, feeble, destitute,
To me a kingdom ! Spare the bitter scorn :
If justice ruled the breast of foreign kings,
Then, on the wide-spread wings
Of war, had I returned to claim my right ;
This will I here avow, not dreading thy despite."

"I do not blame thee," Elidure replied ;
"But, if my looks did with my words agree,
I should at once be trusted, not defied,
And thou from all disquietude be free.
May the unsullied Goddess of the chase,
Who to this blessed place
At this blest moment led me, if I speak
With insincere intent, on me her vengeance wreak !

"Were this same spear which in my hand I grasp
The British sceptre, here would I to thee
The symbol yield ; and would undo this clasp,
If it confined the robe of sovereignty.
Odious to me the pomp of regal court,
And joyless sylvan sport,

While thou art roving, wretched and forlorn,
 Thy couch the dewy earth, thy roof the forest
 thorn !”

Then Artegal thus spake : “ I only sought
 Within this realm a place of safe retreat :
 Beware of rousing an ambitious thought ;
 Beware of kindling hopes, for me unmeet !
 Thou art reputed wise, but in my mind
 Art pitiably blind :

Full soon this generous purpose thou mayst rue,
 When that which has been done no wishes can
 undo.

“ Who, when a crown is fixed upon his head,
 Would balance claim with claim, and right with
 right ?

But thou — I know not how inspired, how led —
 Wouldst change the course of things in all men’s
 sight !

And this for one who cannot imitate
 Thy virtue, who may hate :

For, if, by such strange sacrifice restored,
 He reign, thou still must be his king, and sovereign
 lord ;

“ Lifted in magnanimity above
 Aught that my feeble nature could perform,
 Or even conceive ; surpassing me in love
 Far as in power the eagle doth the worm :

I, Brother ! only should be king in name,
And govern to my shame ;
A shadow in a hated land, while all
Of glad or willing service to thy share would fall."

" Believe it not," said Elidure ; " respect
Awaits on virtuous life, and ever most
Attends on goodness with dominion decked,
Which stands the universal empire's boast ;
This can thy own experience testify :
Nor shall thy foes deny
That, in the gracious opening of thy reign,
Our father's spirit seemed in thee to breathe again.

" And what if o'er that bright unbosoming
Clouds of disgrace and envious fortune passed !
Have we not seen the glories of the spring
By veil of noontide darkness overcast ?
The frith that glittered like a warrior's shield,
The sky, the gay green field,
Are vanished ; gladness ceases in the groves,
And trepidation strikes the blackened mountain-
coves.

" But is that gloom dissolved ? how passing clear
Seems the wide world, far brighter than before !
Even so thy latent worth will reappear,
Gladdening the people's heart from shore to shore ;
For youthful faults ripe virtues shall atone ;
Reseated on thy throne,

Proof shalt thou furnish that misfortune, pain,
And sorrow have confirmed thy native right to
reign.

“ But, not to overlook what thou mayst know,
Thy enemies are neither weak nor few ;
And circumspect must be our course, and slow,
Or from my purpose ruin may ensue.
Dismiss thy followers ; — let them calmly wait
Such change in thy estate
As I already have in thought devised ;
And which, with caution due, may soon be realized.”

The story tells what courses were pursued,
Until King Elidure, with full consent
Of all his peers, before the multitude,
Rose, — and, to consummate this just intent,
Did place upon his brother's head the crown,
Relinquished by his own ;
Then to his people cried, “ Receive your lord,
Gorbonian's first-born son, your rightful king re-
stored ! ”

The people answered with a loud acclaim :
Yet more ; — heart-smitten by the heroic deed,
The reinstated Artegal became
Earth's noblest penitent ; from bondage freed
Of vice, — thenceforth unable to subvert
Or shake his high desert.
Long did he reign ; and when he died, the tear
Of universal grief bedewed his honored bier.

Thus was a Brother by a Brother saved ;
With whom a crown (temptation that hath set
Discord in hearts of men, till they have braved
Their nearest kin with deadly purpose met)
'Gainst duty weighed, and faithful love, did seem
 A thing of no esteem ;
And, from this triumph of affection pure,
He bore the lasting name of " pious Elidure " !

1815.

III.

TO A BUTTERFLY.

I'VE watched you now a full half-hour
Self-poised upon that yellow flower ;
And, little Butterfly ! indeed
I know not if you sleep or feed.
How motionless ! — not frozen seas
More motionless ! — and then
What joy awaits you, when the breeze
Hath found you out among the trees,
And calls you forth again !

This plot of orchard-ground is ours ;
My trees they are, my Sister's flowers :
Here rest your wings when they are weary ;
Here lodge as in a sanctuary !

Come often to us, fear no wrong;
 Sit near us on the bough!
 We'll talk of sunshine and of song,
 And summer days, when we were young;
 Sweet childish days, that were as long
 As twenty days are now.

1801.

 IV.

A FAREWELL.

FAREWELL, thou little Nook of mountain-ground,
 Thou rocky corner in the lowest stair
 Of that magnificent temple which doth bound
 One side of our whole vale with grandeur rare;
 Sweet garden-orchard, eminently fair,
 The loveliest spot that man hath ever found,
 Farewell! — we leave thee to Heaven's peaceful
 care,
 Thee, and the Cottage which thou dost surround.

Our boat is safely anchored by the shore,
 And there will safely ride when we are gone;
 The flowering shrubs that deck our humble door
 Will prosper, though unattended and alone:
 Fields, goods, and far-off chattels we have none:
 These narrow bounds contain our private store

Of things earth makes, and sun doth shine upon ;
Here are they in our sight, — we have no more.

Sunshine and shower be with you, bud and bell !
For two months now in vain we shall be sought ;
We leave you here in solitude to dwell
With these our latest gifts of tender thought ;
Thou, like the morning, in thy saffron coat,
Bright gowan, and marsh-marigold, farewell !
Whom from the borders of the Lake we brought,
And placed together near our rocky Well.

We go for One to whom ye will be dear ;
And she will prize this Bower, this Indian shed,
Our own contrivance, Building without peer !
— A gentle Maid, whose heart is lowly bred,
Whose pleasures are in wild fields gatherèd,
With joyousness, and with a thoughtful cheer,
Will come to you ; to you herself will wed ;
And love the blessed life that we lead here.

Dear Spot ! which we have watched with tender
 heed,
Bringing thee chosen plants and blossoms blown
Among the distant mountains, flower and weed,
Which thou hast taken to thee as thy own,
Making all kindness registered and known ;
Thou for our sakes, though Nature's child indeed,
Fair in thyself and beautiful alone,
Hast taken gifts which thou dost little need.

And O most constant, yet most fickle Place,
 That hast thy wayward moods, as thou dost show
 To them who look not daily on thy face ;
 Who, being loved, in love no bounds dost know,
 And sayst, when we forsake thee, "Let them go!"
 Thou easy-hearted Thing, with thy wild race
 Of weeds and flowers, till we return be slow,
 And travel with the year at a soft pace.

Help us to tell Her tales of years gone by,
 And this sweet spring, the best beloved and best ;
 Joy will be flown in its mortality ;
 Something must stay to tell us of the rest.
 Here, thronged with primroses, the steep rock's
 breast

Glittered at evening like a starry sky ;
 And in this bush our sparrow built her nest,
 Of which I sang one song that will not die.

O happy Garden ! whose seclusion deep
 Hath been so friendly to industrious hours ;
 And to soft slumbers, that did gently steep
 Our spirits, carrying with them dreams of flowers,
 And wild notes warbled among leafy bowers ;
 Two burning months let summer overleap,
 And, coming back with Her who will be ours,
 Into thy bosom we again shall creep.

V.

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN MY POCKET COPY OF THOMSON'S CASTLE OF
INDOLENCE.

WITHIN our happy Castle there dwelt One
Whom without blame I may not overlook ;
For never sun on living creature shone
Who more devout enjoyment with us took :
Here on his hours he hung as on a book ;
On his own time here would he float away,
As doth a fly upon a summer brook ;
But go to-morrow, or belike to-day,
Seek for him, — he is fled ; and whither none can
say.

Thus often would he leave our peaceful home,
And find elsewhere his business or delight ;
Out of our Valley's limits did he roam :
Full many a time, upon a stormy night,
His voice came to us from the neighboring height :
Oft could we see him driving full in view
At midday when the sun was shining bright ;
What ill was on him, what he had to do,
A mighty wonder bred among our quiet crew.

Ah ! piteous sight it was to see this Man
When he came back to us, a withered flower, —

Or like a sinful creature, pale and wan.
 Down would he sit: and without strength or power
 Look at the common grass from hour to hour :
 And oftentimes, how long I fear to say,
 Where apple-trees in blossom made a bower,
 Retired in that sunshiny shade he lay ;
 And, like a naked Indian, slept himself away.

Great wonder to our gentle tribe it was
 Whenever from our Valley he withdrew ;
 For happier soul no living creature has
 Than he had, being here the long day through.
 Some thought he was a lover, and did woo :
 Some thought far worse of him, and judged him
 wrong ;
 But verse was what he had been wedded to ;
 And his own mind did like a tempest strong
 Come to him thus, and drove the weary Wight
 along.

With him there often walked, in friendly guise,
 Or lay upon the moss by brook or tree,
 A noticeable Man with large gray eyes,
 And a pale face that seemed undoubtedly
 As if a blooming face it ought to be ;
 Heavy his low-hung lip did oft appear,
 Deprest by weight of musing Phantasy ;
 Profound his forehead was, though not severe ;
 Yet some did think that he had little business
 here :

Sweet Heaven forefend ! his was a lawful right ;
Noisy he was, and gamesome as a boy ;
His limbs would toss about him with delight,
Like branches when strong winds the trees annoy.
Nor lacked his calmer hours device or toy
To banish listlessness and irksome care ;
He would have taught you how you might employ
Yourself ; and many did to him repair, —
And certes not in vain ; he had inventions rare.

Expedients, too, of simplest sort he tried :
Long blades of grass, plucked round him as he lay,
Made, to his ear attentively applied,
A pipe on which the wind would deftly play ;
Glasses he had, that little things display,
The beetle panoplied in gems and gold,
A mailed angel on a battle-day ;
The mysteries that cups of flowers enfold,
And all the gorgeous sights which fairies do behold.

He would entice that other Man to hear
His music, and to view his imagery :
And, sooth, these two were each to the other dear :
No livelier love in such a place could be :
There did they dwell, — from earthly labor free,
As happy spirits as were ever seen ;
If but a bird, to keep them company,
Or butterfly, sat down, they were, I ween,
As pleased as if the same had been a maiden queen.

VI.

LOUISA.

AFTER ACCOMPANYING HER ON A MOUNTAIN EXCURSION

I MET Louisa in the shade,
And, having seen that lovely maid,
Why should I fear to say
That, nymph-like, she is fleet and strong,
And down the rocks can leap along
Like rivulets in May?

She loves her fire, her cottage home ;
Yet o'er the moorland will she roam
In weather rough and bleak ;
And when against the wind she strains,
O might I kiss the mountain rains
That sparkle on her cheek !

Take all that 's mine "beneath the moon,"
If I with her but half a noon
May sit beneath the walls
Of some old cave, or mossy nook,
When up she winds along the brook
To hunt the waterfalls.

1805.

VII.

STRANGE fits of passion have I known :
And I will dare to tell,
But in the Lover's ear alone,
What once to me befell.

When she I loved looked every day
Fresh as a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath an evening moon.

Upon the moon I fixed my eye,
All over the wide lea ;
With quickening pace my horse drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reached the orchard-plot ;
And, as we climbed the hill,
The sinking moon to Lucy's cot
Came near, and nearer still.

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon !
And all the while my eyes I kept
On the descending moon.

My horse moved on ; hoof after hoof
He raised, and never stopped :

When down behind the cottage roof,
At once, the bright moon dropped.

What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
Into a Lover's head !

"O mercy !" to myself I cried,

"If Lucy should be dead !

1799.

VIII.

SHE dwelt among the untrodden ways

Beside the springs of Dove,

A maid whom there were none to praise

And very few to love :

A violet by a mossy stone

Half hidden from the eye !

Fair as a star, when only one

Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know

When Lucy ceased to be ;

But she is in her grave, and oh !

The difference to me !

1799.

IX.

I TRAVELLED among unknown men,
 In lands beyond the sea;
 Nor, England ! did I know till then
 What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream !
 Nor will I quit thy shore
 A second time ; for still I seem
 To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
 The joy of my desire ;
 And she I cherished turned her wheel
 Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed,
 The bowers where Lucy played ;
 And thine too is the last green field
 That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

1799.

X.

ERE with cold beads of midnight dew
 Had mingled tears of thine,
 I grieve, fond youth ! that thou shouldst sue
 To haughty Geraldine.

Immovable by generous sighs,
 She glories in a train
 Who drag, beneath our native skies,
 An Oriental chain.

Pine not like them with arms across,
 Forgetting in thy care
 How the fast-rooted trees can toss
 Their branches in mid-air.

The humblest rivulet will take
 Its own wild liberties ;
 And, every day, the imprisoned lake
 Is flowing in the breeze.

Then, crouch no more on suppliant kneec,
 But scorn with scorn outbrave ;
 A Briton, even in love, should be
 A subject, not a slave !

1826.

XI.

TO ———.

Look at the fate of summer flowers,
 Which blow at daybreak, droop ere even-song ;
 And, grieved for their brief date, confess that ours,
 Measured by what we are and ought to be,
 Measured by all that, trembling, we foresee,
 Is not so long !

If human Life do pass away,
Perishing yet more swiftly than the flower,
If we are creatures of a *winter's* day ;
What space hath Virgin's beauty to disclose
Her sweets, and triumph o'er the breathing rose ?
Not even an hour !

The deepest grove whose foliage hid
The happiest lovers Arcady might boast,
Could not the entrance of this thought forbid :
O be thou wise as they, soul-gifted Maid !
Nor rate too high what must so quickly fade,
So soon be lost.

Then shall love teach some virtuous Youth
"To draw, out of the object of his eyes,"
The while on thee they gaze in simple truth,
Hues more exalted, "a refinèd Form,"
That dreads not age, nor suffers from the worm,
And never dies.

1824.

XII.

THE FORSAKEN.

THE peace which others seek they find ;
The heaviest storms not longest last ;
Heaven grants even to the guiltiest mind
An amnesty for what is past ;

When will my sentence be reversed?
 I only pray to know the worst;
 And wish as if my heart would burst.

O weary struggle! silent years
 Tell seemingly no doubtful tale;
 And yet they leave it short, and fears
 And hopes are strong and will prevail.
 My calmest faith escapes not pain;
 And, feeling that the hope is vain,
 I think that he will come again.

XIII.

'T is said, that some have died for love:
 And here and there a churchyard grave is found
 In the cold north's unhallowed ground,
 Because the wretched man himself had slain,
 His love was such a grievous pain.
 And there is one whom I five years have known:

He dwells alone
 Upon Helvellyn's side:
 He loved, — the pretty Barbara died;
 And thus he makes his moan:
 Three years had Barbara in her grave been laid
 When thus his moan he made: —

"O move, thou Cottage, from behind that oak !
 Or let the aged tree uprooted lie,
 That in some other way yon smoke
 May mount into the sky !
 The clouds pass on ; they from the heavens depart :
 I look, — the sky is empty space ;
 I know not what I trace ;
 But when I cease to look, my hand is on my heart.

"O, what a weight is in these shades ! Ye leaves,
 That murmur once so dear, when will it cease ?
 Your sound my heart of rest bereaves,
 It robs my heart of peace.
 Thou Thrush, that singest loud — and loud and free,
 Into yon row of willows flit,
 Upon that alder sit ;
 Or sing another song, or choose another tree.

"Roll back, sweet Rill! back to thy mountain-
 bounds,
 And there for ever be thy waters chained !
 For thou dost haunt the air with sounds
 That cannot be sustained ;
 If still beneath that pine-tree's ragged bough
 Headlong yon waterfall must come,
 O let it then be dumb !
 Be anything, sweet Rill, but that which thou art now.

Thou Eglantine, so bright with sunny showers,
 Proud as a rainbow spanning half the vale,

Thou one fair shrub, O, shed thy flowers,
 And stir not in the gale!
 For thus to see thee nodding in the air,
 To see thy arch thus stretch and bend,
 Thus rise and thus descend,
 Disturbs me till the sight is more than I can bear."

The Man who makes this feverish complaint
 Is one of giant stature, who could dance
 Equipped from head to foot in iron mail.
 Ah gentle Love! if ever thought was thine
 To store up kindred hours for me, thy face
 Turn from me, gentle Love! nor let me walk
 Within the sound of Emma's voice, nor know
 Such happiness as I have known to day.

1800.

 XIV.

A COMPLAINT.

THERE is a change, — and I am poor;
 Your love hath been, nor long ago,
 A fountain at my fond heart's door,
 Whose only business was to flow;
 And flow it did; not taking heed
 Of its own bounty, or my need.

What happy moments did I count!
 Blest was I then all bliss above!

Now, for that consecrated fount
Of murmuring, sparkling, living love,
What have I? shall I dare to tell?
A comfortless and hidden well.

A well of love, — it may be deep, —
I trust it is, — and never dry :
What matter? if the waters sleep
In silence and obscurity.
— Such change, and at the very door
Of my fond heart, hath made me poor.

1806

XV.

TO ———.

LET other bards of angels sing,
Bright suns without a spot ;
But thou art no such perfect thing :
Rejoice that thou art not !

Heed not though none should call thee fair ;
So, Mary, let it be
If naught in loveliness compare
With what thou art to me.

True beauty dwells in deep retreats,
Whose veil is unremoved

Till heart with heart in concord beats,
And the lover is beloved.

1824

XVI.

YES ! thou art fair, yet be not moved
To scorn the declaration,
That sometimes I in thee have loved
My fancy's own creation.

Imagination needs must stir ;
Dear Maid, this truth believe,
Minds that have nothing to confer
Find little to perceive.

Be pleased that Nature made thee fit
To feed my heart's devotion,
By laws to which all forms submit,
In sky, air, earth, and ocean.

XVII.

How rich that forehead's calm expanse !
How bright that heaven-directed glance !
— Waft her to glory, wingèd Powers,
Ere sorrow be renewed,

And intercourse with mortal hours
 Bring back a humbler mood !
 So looked Cecilia when she drew
 An angel from his station ;
 So looked ; not ceasing to pursue
 Her tuneful adoration !

But hand and voice alike are still ;
 No sound *here* sweeps away the will
 That gave it birth : in service meek,
 One upright arm sustains the cheek,
 And one across the bosom lies —
 That rose, and now forgets to rise,
 Subdued by breathless harmonies
 Of meditative feeling ;
 Mute strains from worlds beyond the skies,
 Through the pure light of female eyes,
 Their sanctity revealing !

1824.

 XVIII.

WHAT heavenly smiles ! O Lady mine,
 Through my very heart they shine ;
 And, if my brow gives back their light,
 Do thou look gladly on the sight ;
 As the clear Moon with modest pride
 Beholds her own bright beams
 Reflected from the mountain's side
 And from the headlong streams.

XIX.

TO ———.

O DEARER far than light and life are dear,
 Full oft our human foresight I deplore ;
 Trembling, through my unworthiness, with fear
 That friends, by death disjoined, may meet no
 more !

Misgivings, hard to vanquish or control,
 Mix with the day, and cross the hour of rest ;
 While all the future, for thy purer soul,
 With “ sober certainties ” of love is blest.

That sigh of thine, not meant for human ear,
 Tells that these words thy humbleness offend ;
 Yet bear me up, — else faltering in the rear
 Of a steep march : support me to the end.

Peace settles where the intellect is meek,
 And Love is dutiful in thought and deed ;
 Through Thee communion with that Love I seek :
 The faith Heaven strengthens where *he* moulds the
 Creed.

XX.

LAMENT OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS,

ON THE EVE OF A NEW YEAR.

I.

SMILE of the Moon! — for so I name
That silent greeting from above;
A gentle flash of light that came
From her whom drooping captives love;
Or art thou of still higher birth?
Thou that didst part the clouds of earth,
My torpor to reprove!

II.

Bright boon of pitying Heaven! — alas!
I may not trust thy placid cheer,
Pondering that Time to-night will pass
The threshold of another year;
For years to me are sad and dull;
My very moments are too full
Of hopelessness and fear.

III.

And yet, the soul-awakening gleam,
That struck perchance the farthest cone
Of Scotland's rocky wilds, did seem
To visit me, and me alone;
Me, unapproached by any friend,

Save those who to my sorrows lend
Tears due unto their own.

IV.

To-night the church-tower bells will ring
Through these wide realms a festive peal;
To the new year a welcoming;
A tuneful offering for the weal
Of happy millions lulled in sleep;
While I am forced to watch and weep,
By wounds that may not heal.

V.

Born all too high, by wedlock raised
Still higher — to be cast thus low!
Would that mine eyes had never gazed
On aught of more ambitious show
Than the sweet flowerets of the fields!
— It is my royal state that yields
This bitterness of woe.

VI.

Yet how? — for I, if there be truth
In the world's voice, was passing fair;
And beauty, for confiding youth,
Those shocks of passion can prepare
That kill the bloom before its time;
And blanch, without the owner's crime,
The most resplendent hair.

VII.

Unblest distinction ! showered on me
To bind a lingering life in chains :
All that could quit my grasp, or flee,
Is gone ; — but not the subtle stains
Fixed in the spirit ; for even here
Can I be proud that jealous fear
Of what I was remains.

VIII.

A woman rules my prison's key ;
A sister Queen, against the bent
Of law and holiest sympathy,
Detains me, doubtful of the event ;
Great God, who feel'st for my distress,
My thoughts are all that I possess,
O keep them innocent !

IX.

Farewell desire of human aid,
Which abject mortals vainly court !
By friends deceived, by foes betrayed,
Of fears the prey, of hopes the sport ;
Naught but the world-redeeming Cross
Is able to supply my loss,
My burden to support.

X.

Hark ! the death-note of the year
Sounded by the castle clock !

From her sunk eyes a stagnant tear
 Stole forth, unsettled by the shock ;
 But oft the woods renewed their green,
 Ere the tired head of Scotland's Queen
 Reposed upon the block !

1817.

 XXI.

THE COMPLAINT

OF A FORSAKEN INDIAN WOMAN.

[When a Northern Indian, from sickness, is unable to continue his journey with his companions, he is left behind, covered over with deer-skins, and is supplied with water, food, and fuel, if the situation of the place will afford it. He is informed of the track which his companions intend to pursue, and if he be unable to follow, or overtake them, he perishes alone in the desert; unless he should have the good fortune to fall in with some other tribes of Indians. The females are equally, or still more, exposed to the same fate. See that very interesting work, Hearne's Journey from Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean. In the high northern latitudes, as the same writer informs us, when the northern lights vary their position in the air, they make a rustling and a crackling noise, as alluded to in the following poem.]

I.

BEFORE I see another day,
 O let my body die away !
 In sleep I heard the northern gleams ;
 The stars, they were among my dreams ;

In rustling conflict through the skies,
I heard, I saw the flashes drive,
And yet they are upon my eyes,
And yet I am alive ;
Before I see another day,
O let my body die away !

II.

My fire is dead : it knew no pain ;
Yet is it dead, and I remain :
All stiff with ice the ashes lie ;
And they are dead, and I will die.
When I was well, I wished to live,
For clothes, for warmth, for food, and fire ;
But they to me no joy can give,
No pleasure now, and no desire.
Then here contented will I lie !
Alone, I cannot fear to die.

III.

Alas ! ye might have dragged me on
Another day, a single one !
Too soon I yielded to despair ;
Why did ye listen to my prayer ?
When ye were gone my limbs were stronger ;
And oh ! how grievously I rue,
That, afterwards, a little longer,
My friends, I did not follow you !
For strong and without pain I lay,
Dear friends, when ye were gone away.

IV.

My Child ! they gave thee to another,
 A woman who was not thy mother.
 When from my arms my babe they took,
 On me how strangely did he look !
 Through his whole body something ran,
 A most strange working did I see, —
 As if he strove to be a man,
 That he might pull the sledge for me :
 And then he stretched his arms, how wild !
 O mercy ! like a helpless child.

V.

My little joy ! my little pride !
 In two days more I must have died.
 Then do not weep and grieve for me ;
 I feel I must have died with thee.
 O wind, that o'er my head art flying
 The way my friends their course did bend,
 I should not feel the pain of dying,
 Could I with thee a message send ;
 Too soon, my friends, ye went away ;
 For I had many things to say.

VI.

I'll follow you across the snow ;
 Ye travel heavily and slow ;
 In spite of all my weary pain,
 I'll look upon your tents again.
 — My fire is dead, and snowy white

The water which beside it stood :
The wolf has come to me to-night,
And he has stolen away my food.
For ever left alone am I ;
Then wherefore should I fear to die ?

VII.

Young as I am, my course is run,
I shall not see another sun ;
I cannot lift my limbs to know
If they have any life or no.
My poor forsaken Child ! if I
For once could have thee close to me,
With happy heart I then would die,
And my last thought would happy be ;
But thou, dear Babe, art far away,
Nor shall I see another day.

1798.

XXII.

THE LAST OF THE FLOCK.

I.

IN distant countries have I been,
And yet I have not often seen
A healthy man, a man full grown,
Weep in the public roads alone.

But such a one, on English ground,
 And in the broad highway, I met ;
 Along the broad highway he came,
 His cheeks with tears were wet :
 Sturdy he seemed, though he was sad ;
 And in his arms a Lamb he had.

II.

He saw me, and he turned aside,
 As if he wished himself to hide :
 And with his coat did then essay
 To wipe those briny tears away.
 I followed him, and said, " My friend,
 What ails you ? wherefore weep you so ? "
 — " Shame on me, Sir ! this lusty Lamb,
 He makes my tears to flow.
 To-day I fetched him from the rock :
 He is the last of all my flock.

III.

" When I was young, a single man,
 And after youthful follies ran,
 Though little given to care and thought,
 Yet, so it was, an ewe I bought ;
 And other sheep from her I raised,
 As healthy sheep as you might see ;
 And then I married, and was rich
 As I could wish to be ;
 Of sheep I numbered a full score,
 And every year increased my store.

IV.

“Year after year my stock it grew ;
And from this one, this single ewe,
Full fifty comely sheep I raised,
As fine a flock as ever grazed !
Upon the Quantock hills they fed ;
They throve, and we at home did thrive :
— This lusty Lamb of all my store
Is all that is alive ;
And now I care not if we die,
And perish all of poverty.

V.

“Six children, Sir ! had I to feed ;
Hard labor in a time of need !
My pride was tamed, and in our grief
I of the Parish asked relief.
They said I was a wealthy man ;
My sheep upon the uplands fed,
And it was fit that thence I took
Whereof to buy us bread.
‘Do this : how can we give to you,’
They cried, ‘what to the poor is due ?’

VI.

“I sold a sheep, as they have said,
And bought my little children bread,
And they were healthy with their food ;
For me, — it never did me good.
A woful time it was for me,

To see the end of all my gains,
 The pretty flock which I had reared
 With all my care and pains,
 To see it melt like snow away, —
 For me it was a woful day.

VII.

“ Another still ! and still another !
 A little lamb, and then its mother !
 It was a vein that never stopped, —
 Like blood-drops from my heart they dropped.
 Till thirty were not left alive,
 They dwindled, dwindled, one by one ;
 And I may say, that many a time
 I wished that all were gone, —
 Reckless of what might come at last,
 Were but the bitter struggle past.

VIII.

“ To wicked deeds I was inclined,
 And wicked fancies crossed my mind ;
 And every man I chanced to see,
 I thought he knew some ill of me :
 No peace, no comfort, could I find,
 No ease, within doors or without ;
 And crazily and wearily
 I went my work about ;
 And oft was moved to flee from home,
 And hide my head where wild beasts roam.

IX.

“Sir! ’t was a precious flock to me,
As dear as my own children be ;
For daily with my growing store
I loved my children more and more.
Alas ! it was an evil time ;
God cursed me in my sore distress ;
I prayed, yet every day I thought
I loved my children less ;
And every week, and every day,
My flock it seemed to melt away.

X.

“They dwindled, Sir, sad sight to see !
From ten to five, from five to three,
A lamb, a wether, and a ewe ;—
And then at last from three to two ;
And, of my fifty, yesterday
I had but only one :
And here it lies upon my arm,
Alas ! and I have none ;—
To-day I fetched it from the rock ;
It is the last of all my flock.”

XXIII.

REPENTANCE.

A PASTORAL BALLAD.

THE fields which with covetous spirit we sold,
 Those beautiful fields, the delight of the day,
 Would have brought us more good than a burden
 of gold,
 Could we but have been as contented as they.

When the troublesome Tempter beset us, said I,
 "Let him come, with his purse proudly grasped
 in his hand ;
 But, Allan,—be true to me, Allan,—we 'll die
 Before he shall go with an inch of the land !"

There dwelt we, as happy as birds in their bowers,
 Unfettered as bees that in gardens abide ;
 We could do what we liked with the land, it was
 ours ;
 And for us the brook murmured that ran by its
 side.

But now we are strangers, go early or late ;
 And often, like one overburdened with sin,
 With my hand on the latch of the half-opened gate,
 I look at the fields, but I cannot go in !

When I walk by the hedge on a bright summer's
 day,
 Or sit in the shade of my grandfather's tree,
 A stern face it puts on, as if ready to say,
 "What ails you, that you must come creeping to
 me!"

With our pastures about us, we could not be sad;
 Our comfort was near if we ever were crost;
 But the comfort, the blessings, and wealth that we
 had,
 We slighted them all,—and our birthright was
 lost.

O ill-judging sire of an innocent son,
 Who must now be a wanderer! but peace to that
 strain!
 Think of evening's repose when our labor was
 done,
 The Sabbath's return; and its leisure's soft chain!

And in sickness, if night had been sparing of sleep,
 How cheerful, at sunrise, the hill where I stood,
 Looking down on the kine, and our treasure of
 sheep
 That besprinkled the field; 't was like youth in my
 blood!

Now I cleave to the house, and am dull as a snail;
 And, oftentimes, hear the church-bell with a sigh,

That follows the thought, We've no land in the
vale,

Save six feet of earth where our forefathers lie!

1804.

XXIV.

THE AFFLICTION OF MARGARET —.

I.

WHERE art thou, my beloved Son,
Where art thou, worse to me than dead?
O find me, prosperous or undone!
Or, if the grave be now thy bed,
Why am I ignorant of the same,
That I may rest, and neither blame
Nor sorrow may attend thy name?

II.

Seven years, alas! to have received
No tidings of an only child;
To have despaired, have hoped, believed,
And been for evermore beguiled;
Sometimes with thoughts of very bliss!
I catch at them, and then I miss;
Was ever darkness like to this?

III.

He was among the prime in worth,
An object beauteous to behold;

Well born, well bred ; I sent him forth
 Ingenuous, innocent, and bold :
 If things ensued that wanted grace,
 As hath been said, they were not base ;
 And never blush was on my face.

IV.

Ah ! little doth the young-one dream,
 When full of play and childish cares,
 What power is in his wildest scream,
 Heard by his mother unawares !
 He knows it not, he cannot guess :
 Years to a mother bring distress ;
 But do not make her love the less.

V.

Neglect me ! no, I suffered long
 From that ill thought ; and, being blind,
 Said, " Pride shall help me in my wrong :
 Kind mother have I been, as kind
 As ever breathed " : and that is true ;
 I 've wet my path with tears like dew,
 Weeping for him when no one knew.

VI.

My Son, if thou be humbled, poor,
 Hopeless of honor and of gain,
 O do not dread thy mother's door !
 Think not of me with grief and pain :
 I now can see with better eyes ;

And worldly grandeur I despise,
And Fortune with her gifts and lies.

VII.

Alas ! the fowls of heaven have wings,
And blasts of heaven will aid their flight ;
They mount, — how short a voyage brings
The wanderers back to their delight !
Chains tie us down by land and sea ;
And wishes, vain as mine, may be
All that is left to comfort thee.

VIII.

Perhaps some dungeon hears thee groan,
Maimed, mangled by inhuman men ;
Or thou, upon a desert thrown,
Inheritest the lion's den ;
Or hast been summoned to the deep,
Thou, thou and all thy mates, to keep
An incommunicable sleep.

IX.

I look for ghosts ; but none will force
Their way to me : 't is falsely said
That there was ever intercourse
Between the living and the dead ;
For, surely, then I should have sight
Of him I wait for day and night,
With love and longings infinite.

X.

My apprehensions come in crowds ;
 I dread the rustling of the grass ;
 The very shadows of the clouds
 Have power to shake me as they pass :
 I question things and do not find
 One that will answer to my mind ;
 And all the world appears unkind.

XI.

Beyond participation lie
 My troubles, and beyond relief :
 If any chance to heave a sigh,
 Then pity me, and not my grief.
 Then come to me, my Son, or send
 Some tidings that my woes may end ;
 I have no other earthly friend !

1804

XXV.

THE COTTAGER TO HER INFANT.

BY MY SISTER.

THE days are cold, the nights are long,
 The north wind sings a doleful song ;
 Then hush again upon my breast ;
 All merry things are now at rest,
 Save thee, my pretty Love !

The kitten sleeps upon the hearth,
 The crickets long have ceased their mirth,
 There 's nothing stirring in the house,
 Save one *wee*, hungry, nibbling mouse :
 Then why so busy thou ?

Nay ! start not at that sparkling light ;
 'T is but the moon that shines so bright
 On the window-pane bedropped with rain .
 Then, little Darling ! sleep again,
 And wake when it is day.

1805

 XXVI.

MATERNAL GRIEF.

DEPARTED Child ! I could forget thee once,
 Though at my bosom nursed ; this woful gain
 Thy dissolution brings, that in my soul
 Is present and perpetually abides
 A shadow, never, never to be displaced
 By the returning substance, seen or touched,
 Seen by mine eyes, or clasped in my embrace.
 Absence and death how differ they ! and how
 Shall I admit that nothing can restore
 What one short sigh so easily removed ?
 Death, life, and sleep, reality and thought, —

Assist me, God, their boundaries to know !
O teach me calm submission to thy Will !

The Child she mourned had overstepped the
pale
Of Infancy, but still did breathe the air
That sanctifies its confines, and partook
Reflected beams of that celestial light
To all the Little-ones on sinful earth
Not unvouchsafed,—a light that warmed and
cheered

Those several qualities of heart and mind
Which, in her own blest nature rooted deep,
Daily before the Mother's watchful eye,
And not hers only, their peculiar charms
Unfolded, — beauty, for its present self,
And for its promises to future years,
With not unfrequent rapture fondly hailed.

Have you espied upon a dewy lawn
A pair of Leverets each provoking each
To a continuance of their fearless sport,
Two separate creatures in their several gifts
Abounding, but so fashioned that, in all
That Nature prompts them to display, their looks,
Their starts of motion, and their fits of rest,
An undistinguishable style appears
And character of gladness, as if Spring
Lodged in their innocent bosoms, and the spirit
Of the rejoicing morning were their own.

Such union, in the lovely Girl maintained
 And her twin Brother, had the parent seen,
 Ere, pouncing like a ravenous bird of prey,
 Death in a moment parted them, and left
 The Mother, in her turns of anguish, worse
 Than desolate ; for ofttimes from the sound
 Of the survivor's sweetest voice, (dear child,
 He knew it not !) and from his happiest looks,
 Did she extract the food of self-reproach,
 As one that lived ungrateful for the stay
 By Heaven afforded to uphold her maimed
 And tottering spirit. And full oft the Boy,
 Now first acquainted with distress and grief,
 Shrunk from his Mother's presence, shunned with
 fear

Her sad approach, and stole away to find,
 In his known haunts of joy, where'er he might,
 A more congenial object. But, as time
 Softened her pangs and reconciled the child
 To what he saw, he gradually returned,
 Like a scared Bird encouraged to renew
 A broken intercourse ; and, while his eyes
 Were yet with pensive fear and gentle awe
 Turned upon her who bore him, she would stoop
 To imprint a kiss that lacked not power to spread
 Faint color over both their pallid cheeks,
 And stilled his tremulous lip. Thus they were
 calmed

And cheered ; and now together breathe fresh air
 In open fields ; and when the glare of day

Is gone, and twilight to the Mother's wish
Befriends the observance, readily they join
In walks whose boundary was the lost One's grave,
Which he with flowers hath planted, finding there
Amusement, where the Mother does not miss
Dear consolation, kneeling on the turf
In prayer; yet blending with that solemn rite
Of pious faith the vanities of grief;
For such, by pitying Angels and by Spirits
Transferred to regions upon which the clouds
Of our weak nature rest not, must be deemed
Those willing tears, and unforbidden sighs,
And all those tokens of a cherished sorrow,
Which, soothed and sweetened by the grace of
 Heaven,
As now it is, seems to her own fond heart
Immortal as the love that gave it being.

XXVII.

THE SAILOR'S MOTHER.

ONE morning (raw it was and wet, —
A foggy day in winter-time)
A Woman on the road I met,
Not old, though something past her prime:
Majestic in her person, tall and straight;
And like a Roman matron's was her mien and gait.

The ancient spirit is not dead ;
 Old times, thought I, are breathing there ;
 Proud was I that my country bred
 Such strength, a dignity so fair :
 She begged an alms, like one in poor estate ;
 I looked at her again, nor did my pride abate.

When from these lofty thoughts I woke,
 "What is it," said I, "that you bear
 Beneath the covert of your cloak,
 Protected from this cold, damp air ?"
 She answered, soon as she the question heard,
 "A simple burden, Sir, a little Singing-bird."

And, thus continuing, she said,
 "I had a Son, who many a day
 Sailed on the seas, but he is dead ;
 In Denmark he was cast away :
 And I have travelled weary miles to see
 If aught which he had owned might still remain
 for me.

"The bird and cage, they both were his :
 'T was my Son's bird ; and neat and trim
 He kept it : many voyages
 The singing-bird had gone with him ;
 When last he sailed, he left the bird behind,
 From bodings, as might be, that hung upon his
 mind.

“He to a fellow-lodger’s care
Had left it, to be watched and fed,
And pipe its song in safety; — there
I found it when my Son was dead;
And now, God help me for my little wit!
I bear it with me, Sir; — he took so much delight
in it.”

1800.

XXVIII.

THE CHILDLESS FATHER.

“UP, Timothy, up with your staff and away!
Not a soul in the village this morning will stay;
The hare has just started from Hamilton’s grounds,
And Skiddaw is glad with the cry of the hounds.”

— Of coats and of jackets gray, scarlet, and green,
On the slopes of the pastures all colors were seen;
With their comely blue aprons, and caps white as
snow,

The girls on the hills made a holiday show.

Fresh sprigs of green box-wood, not six months
before,

Filled the funeral basin * at Timothy’s door;

* In several parts of the North of England, when a funeral takes place, a basin full of sprigs of box-wood is placed at the door of the house from which the coffin is taken up, and each person who attends the funeral ordinarily takes a sprig of this box-wood, and throws it into the grave of the deceased.

A coffin through Timothy's threshold had past ;
One Child did it bear, and that Child was his last.

Now fast up the dell came the noise and the fray,
The horse and the horn, and the hark ! hark away !
Old Timothy took up his staff, and he shut
With a leisurely motion the door of his hut.

Perhaps to himself at that moment he said,
" The key I must take, for my Ellen is dead."
But of this in my ears not a word did he speak ;
And he went to the chase with a tear on his cheek.

1800.

XXIX.

THE EMIGRANT MOTHER.

ONCE in a lonely hamlet I sojourned,
In which a Lady driven from France did dwell ;
The big and lesser griefs with which she mourned,
In friendship she to me would often tell.

This Lady, dwelling upon British ground,
Where she was childless, daily would repair
To a poor neighboring cottage ; as I found,
For sake of a young Child whose home was there.

Once having seen her clasp with fond embrace
This Child, I chanted to myself a lay,
Endeavoring, in our English tongue, to trace
Such things as she unto the Babe might say :
And thus, from what I heard and knew, or guessed,
My song the workings of her heart expressed.

I.

Dear Babe, thou daughter of another,
One moment let me be thy mother !
An infant's face and looks are thine,
And sure a mother's heart is mine ;
Thy own dear mother's far away,
At labor in the harvest field :
Thy little sister is at play ;—
What warmth, what comfort would it yield
To my poor heart, if thou wouldst be
One little hour a child to me !

II.

Across the waters I am come,
And I have left a babe at home :
A long, long way of land and sea !
Come to me, — I'm no enemy :
I am the same who at thy side
Sat yesterday, and made a nest
For thee, sweet Baby ! — thou hast tried,
Thou know'st the pillow of my breast ;
Good, good art thou : — alas ! to me
Far more than I can be to thee.

III.

Here, little Darling, dost thou lie;
 An infant thou, a mother I !
 Mine wilt thou be, thou hast no fears ;
 Mine art thou — spite of these my tears.
 Alas ! before I left the spot,
 My baby and its dwelling-place,
 The nurse said to me, “ Tears should not
 Be shed upon an infant’s face,
 It was unlucky,” — no, no, no ;
 No truth is in them who say so !

IV.

My own dear Little-one will sigh,
 Sweet Babe ! and they will let him die.
 “ He pines,” they ’ll say, “ it is his doom,
 And you may see his hour is come.”
 Oh ! had he but thy cheerful smiles,
 Limbs stout as thine, and lips as gay,
 Thy looks, thy cunning, and thy wiles,
 And countenance like a summer’s day,
 They would have hopes of him ; — and then
 I should behold his face again !

V.

’T is gone, — like dreams that we forget ;
 There was a smile or two ; yet, yet
 I can remember them, I see
 The smiles, worth all the world to me.
 Dear Baby ! I must lay thee down ;

Thou troublest me with strange alarms ;
Smiles hast thou, bright ones of thy own ;
I cannot keep thee in my arms ;
For they confound me ; — where — where is
That last, that sweetest smile of his ?

VI.

O how I love thee ! — we will stay
Together here this one half-day.
My sister's child, who bears my name,
From France to sheltering England came ;
She with her mother crossed the sea ;
The babe and mother near me dwell :
Yet does my yearning heart to thee
Turn rather, though I love her well :
Rest, little Stranger, rest thee here !
Never was any child more dear !

VII.

— I cannot help it ; ill intent
I've none, my pretty Innocent !
I weep, — I know they do thee wrong,
These tears — and my poor idle tongue.
O what a kiss was that ! my cheek
How cold it is ! but thou art good ;
Thine eyes are on me, — they would speak,
I think, to help me if they could.
Blessings upon that soft, warm face !
My heart again is in its place !

VIII.

While thou art mine, my little Love,
 This cannot be a sorrowful grove ;
 Contentment, hope, and mother's glee,
 I seem to find them all in thee :
 Here 's grass to play with, here are flowers ;
 I 'll call thee by my darling's name ;
 Thou hast, I think, a look of ours,
 Thy features seem to me the same ;
 His little sister thou shalt be ;
 And, when once more my home I see,
 I 'll tell him many tales of thee.

1802.

XXX.

VAUDRACOUR AND JULIA.

The following tale was written as an episode, in a work from which its length may perhaps exclude it. The facts are true; no invention as to these has been exercised, as none was needed.

O HAPPY time of youthful lovers, (thus
 My story may begin,) O balmy time,
 In which a love-knot on a lady's brow
 Is fairer than the fairest star in heaven !
 To such inheritance of blessed fancy
 (Fancy that sports more desperately with minds
 Than ever fortune hath been known to do)

The high-born Vaudracour was brought, by years
Whose progress had a little overstepped
His stripling prime. A town of small repute,
Among the vine-clad mountains of Auvergne,
Was the Youth's birthplace. There he wooed a
Maid

Who heard the heart-felt music of his suit
With answering vows. Plebeian was the stock,
Plebeian, though ingenuous, the stock,
From which her graces and her honors sprung :
And hence the father of the enamored Youth,
With haughty indignation, spurned the thought
Of such alliance. — From their cradles up,
With but a step between their several homes,
Twins had they been in pleasure ; after strife
And petty quarrels, had grown fond again ;
Each other's advocate, each other's stay ;
And, in their happiest moments, not content,
If more divided than a sportive pair
Of sea-fowl, conscious both that they are hovering
Within the eddy of a common blast,
Or hidden only by the concave depth
Of neighboring billows from each other's sight.

Thus, not without concurrence of an age
Unknown to memory, was an earnest given
By ready nature for a life of love,
For endless constancy, and placid truth ;
But whatsoe'er of such rare treasure lay
Reserved, had fate permitted, for support

Of their maturer years, his present mind
 Was under fascination ; — he beheld
 A vision, and adored the thing he saw.
 Arabian fiction never filled the world
 With half the wonders that were wrought for him.
 Earth breathed in one great presence of the spring ;
 Life turned the meanest of her implements,
 Before his eyes, to price above all gold ;
 The house she dwelt in was a sainted shrine ;
 Her chamber-window did surpass in glory
 The portals of the dawn ; all paradise
 Could, by the simple opening of a door,
 Let itself in upon him : — pathways, walks,
 Swarmed with enchantment, till his spirit sank,
 Surcharged, within him, overblest to move
 Beneath a sun that wakes a weary world
 To its dull round of ordinary cares ;
 A man too happy for mortality !

So passed the time, till, whether through effect
 Of some unguarded moment that dissolved
 Virtuous restraint — ah, speak it, think it not !
 Deem rather that the fervent Youth, who saw
 So many bars between his present state
 And the dear haven where he wished to be
 In honorable wedlock with his Love,
 Was in his judgment tempted to decline
 To perilous weakness, and intrust his cause
 To nature for a happy end of all ;
 Deem that by such fond hope the Youth was swayed,

And bear with their transgression, when I add
That Julia, wanting yet the name of wife,
Carried about her for a secret grief
The promise of a mother.

To conceal

The threatened shame, the parents of the Maid
Found means to hurry her away by night,
And unforwarned, that in some distant spot
She might remain shrouded in privacy,
Until the babe was born. When morning came,
The Lover, thus bereft, stung with his loss,
And all uncertain whither he should turn,
Chafed like a wild beast in the toils ; but soon
Discovering traces of the fugitives,
Their steps he followed to the Maid's retreat.
Easily may the sequel be divined, —
Walks to and fro, — watchings at every hour ;
And the fair Captive, who, whene'er she may,
Is busy at her casement as the swallow
Fluttering its pinions, almost within reach,
About the pendent nest, did thus espy
Her Lover ! — thence a stolen interview,
Accomplished under friendly shade of night.

I pass the raptures of the pair ; — such theme
Is, by innumerable poets, touched
In more delightful verse than skill of mine
Could fashion ; chiefly by that darling bard
Who told of Juliet and her Romeo,
And of the lark's note heard before its time,

And of the streaks that laced the severing clouds
 In the unrelenting east. — Through all her courts
 The vacant city slept ; the busy winds,
 That keep no certain intervals of rest,
 Moved not ; meanwhile the galaxy displayed
 Her fires, that like mysterious pulses beat
 Aloft ; — momentous but uneasy bliss !
 To their full hearts the universe seemed hung
 On that brief meeting's slender filament !

They parted ; and the generous Vaudracour
 Reached speedily the native threshold, bent
 On making (so the Lovers had agreed)
 A sacrifice of birthright to attain
 A final portion from his father's hand ;
 Which granted, Bride and Bridegroom then would
 flee

To some remote and solitary place,
 Shady as night, and beautiful as heaven,
 Where they may live, with no one to behold
 Their happiness, or to disturb their love.
 But *now* of this no whisper ; not the less,
 If ever an obtrusive word were dropped
 Touching the matter of his passion, still,
 In his stern father's hearing, Vaudracour
 Persisted openly that death alone
 Should abrogate his human privilege
 Divine, of swearing everlasting truth,
 Upon the altar, to the Maid he loved.

“ You shall be baffled in your mad intent
If there be justice in the Court of France,”
Muttered the Father. — From these words the
Youth

Conceived a terror ; and, by night or day,
Stirred nowhere without weapons, that full soon
Found dreadful provocation : for at night,
When to his chamber he retired, attempt
Was made to seize him by three armed men,
Acting, in furtherance of the father’s will,
Under a private signet of the State.
One the rash Youth’s ungovernable hand
Slew, and as quickly to a second gave
A perilous wound. He shuddered to behold
The breathless corse ; then peacefully resigned
His person to the law, was lodged in prison,
And wore the fetters of a criminal.

Have you observed a tuft of wingèd seed,
That, from the dandelion’s naked stalk,
Mounted aloft, is suffered not to use
Its natural gifts for purposes of rest,
Driven by the autumnal whirlwind to and fro
Through the wide element ? or have you marked
The heavier substance of a leaf-clad bough,
Within the vortex of a foaming flood,
Tormented ? By such aid you may conceive
The perturbation that ensued ; — ah, no !
Desperate the Maid, — the Youth is stained with
blood ;

Unmatchable on earth is their disquiet !
 Yet as the troubled seed and tortured bough
 Is Man, subjected to despotic sway.

For him, by private influence with the Court,
 Was pardon gained, and liberty procured ;
 But not without exaction of a pledge,
 Which liberty and love dispersed in air.
 He flew to her from whom they would divide him ;—
 He clove to her who could not give him peace ;—
 Yea, his first word of greeting was, “ All right
 Is gone from me ; my lately towering hopes,
 To the least fibre of their lowest root,
 Are withered ; thou no longer canst be mine,
 I thine ;— the conscience-stricken must not woo
 The unruffled Innocent. I see thy face,
 Behold thee, and my misery is complete ! ”

“ One, are we not ? ” exclaimed the Maiden ;—

“ One,

For innocence and youth, for weal and woe ? ”
 Then with the father’s name she coupled words
 Of vehement indignation ; but the Youth
 Checked her with filial meekness ; for no thought
 Uncharitable crossed his mind, no sense
 Of hasty anger, rising in the eclipse
 Of true domestic loyalty, did e’er
 Find place within his bosom. — Once again
 The persevering wedge of tyranny
 Achieved their separation : and once more

Were they united, — to be yet again
 Disparted, pitiable lot ! But here
 A portion of the tale may well be left
 In silence, though my memory could add
 Much how the Youth, in scanty space of time,
 Was traversed from without ; much, too, of thoughts
 That occupied his days in solitude,
 Under privation and restraint ; and what,
 Through dark and shapeless fear of things to come,
 And what, through strong compunction for the past,
 He suffered, — breaking down in heart and mind !

Doomed to a third and last captivity,
 His freedom he recovered on the eve
 Of Julia's travail. When the babe was born,
 Its presence tempted him to cherish schemes
 Of future happiness. " You shall return,
 Julia," said he, " and to your father's house
 Go with the child. — You have been wretched ; yet
 The silver shower, whose reckless burden weighs
 Too heavily upon the lily's head,
 Oft leaves a saving moisture at its root.
 Malice, beholding you, will melt away.
 Go ! — 't is a town where both of us were born ;
 None will reproach you, for our truth is known ;
 And if, amid those once-bright bowers, our fate
 Remain unpitied, pity is not in man.
 With ornaments — the prettiest nature yields
 Or art can fashion — shall you deck our boy,
 And feed his countenance with your own sweet looks

Till no one can resist him. — Now, even now,
 I see him sporting on the sunny lawn ;
 My father from the window sees him too ;
 Startled, as if some new-created thing
 Enriched the earth, or Faery of the woods
 Bounded before him ; — but the unweeting Child
 Shall by his beauty win his grandsire's heart
 So that it shall be softened, and our loves
 End happily, as they began ! ”

These gleams

Appeared but seldom ; oftener was he seen
 Propping a pale and melancholy face
 Upon the Mother's bosom ; resting thus
 His head upon one breast, while from the other
 The Babe was drawing in its quiet food.
 — That pillow is no longer to be thine,
 Fond Youth ! that mournful solace now must pass
 Into the list of things that cannot be !
 Unwedded Julia, terror-smitten, hears
 The sentence, by her mother's lip pronounced,
 That dooms her to a convent. — Who shall tell,
 Who dares report, the tidings to the lord
 Of her affections ? So they blindly asked,
 Who knew not to what quiet depths a weight
 Of agony had pressed the Sufferer down :
 The word, by others dreaded, he can hear
 Composed and silent, without visible sign
 Of even the least emotion. Noting this,
 When the impatient object of his love
 Upbraided him with slackness, he returned

No answer, only took the mother's hand
 And kissed it ; seemingly devoid of pain,
 Or care, that what so tenderly he pressed
 Was a dependent on the obdurate heart
 Of one who came to disunite their lives
 For ever, — sad alternative ! preferred,
 By the unbending parents of the Maid,
 To secret 'spousals meanly disavowed.
 — So be it !

In the city he remained

A season after Julia had withdrawn
 To those religious walls. He, too, departs ; —
 Who with him ? — even the senseless Little-one.
 With that sole charge he passed the city-gates,
 For the last time, attendant by the side
 Of a close chair, a litter, or sedan,
 In which the Babe was carried. To a hill,
 That rose a brief league distant from the town,
 The dwellers in that house where he had lodged
 Accompanied his steps, by anxious love
 Impelled ; — they parted from him there, and
 stood

Watching below, till he had disappeared
 On the hill-top. His eyes he scarcely took,
 Throughout that journey, from the vehicle
 (Slow-moving ark of all his hopes !) that veiled
 The tender infant : and at every inn,
 And under every hospitable tree
 At which the bearers halted or reposed,
 Laid him with timid care upon his knees,

And looked, as mothers ne'er were known to look,
Upon the nurstling which his arms embraced.

This was the manner in which Vaudracour
Departed with his infant ; and thus reached
His father's house, where to the innocent child
Admittance was denied. The young man spake
No word of indignation or reproof,
But of his father begged, a last request,
That a retreat might be assigned to him
Where in forgotten quiet he might dwell,
With such allowance as his wants required ;
For wishes he had none. To a lodge that stood
Deep in a forest, with leave given, at the age
Of four-and-twenty summers he withdrew ;
And thither took with him his motherless Babe,
And one domestic for their common needs,
An aged woman. It consoled him here
To attend upon the orphan, and perform
Obsequious service to the precious child,
Which, after a short time, by some mistake
Or indiscretion of the Father, died. —
The Tale I follow to its last recess
Of suffering or of peace, I know not which :
Theirs be the blame who caused the woe, not
mine !

From this time forth he never shared a smile
With mortal creature. An inhabitant
Of that same town, in which the pair had left

So lively a remembrance of their griefs,
 By chance of business coming within reach
 Of his retirement, to the forest lodge
 Repaired, but only found the matron there,
 Who told him that his pains were thrown away,
 For that her master never uttered word
 To living thing. — not even to her. — Behold !
 While they were speaking, Vaudracour approached ;
 But, seeing some one near, as on the latch
 Of the garden-gate his hand was laid, he shrank, —
 And, like a shadow, glided out of view.
 Shocked at his savage aspect, from the place
 The visitor retired.

Thus lived the Youth,
 Cut off from all intelligence with man,
 And shunning even the light of common day ;
 Nor could the voice of Freedom, which through
 France
 Full speedily resounded, public hope,
 Or personal memory of his own deep wrongs,
 Rouse him : but in those solitary shades
 His days he wasted, an imbecile mind !

XXXI.

THE IDIOT BOY.

'T is eight o'clock, — a clear March night,
The moon is up, — the sky is blue,
The owlet, in the moonlight air,
Shouts from nobody knows where ;
He lengthens out his lonely shout,
Halloo ! halloo ! a long halloo !

— Why bustle thus about your door,
What means this bustle, Betty Foy ?
Why are you in this mighty fret ?
And why on horseback have you set
Him whom you love, your Idiot Boy ?

Scarcely a soul is out of bed ;
Good Betty, put him down again ;
His lips with joy they burr at you ;
But, Betty ! what has he to do
With stirrup, saddle, or with rein ?

But Betty 's bent on her intent ;
For her good neighbor, Susan Gale,
Old Susan, she who dwells alone,
Is sick, and makes a piteous moan,
As if her very life would fail.

There 's not a house within a mile,
No hand to help them in distress ;
Old Susan lies a-bed in pain,
And sorely puzzled are the twain,
For what she ails they cannot guess.

And Betty's husband 's at the wood,
Where by the week he doth abide,
A woodman in the distant vale ;
There 's none to help poor Susan Gale ;
What must be done ? what will betide ?

And Betty from the lane has fetched
Her Pony, that is mild and good ;
Whether he be in joy or pain,
Feeding at will along the lane,
Or bringing fagots from the wood.

And he is all in travelling trim, —
And, by the moonlight, Betty Foy
Has on the well-girt saddle set
(The like was never heard of yet)
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy.

And he must post without delay
Across the bridge and through the dale,
And by the church, and o'er the down,
To bring a doctor from the town,
Or she will die, old Susan Gale.

There is no need of boot or spur,
 There is no need of whip or wand ;
 For Johnny has his holly-bough,
 And with a *hurly-burly* now
 He shakes the green bough in his hand.

And Betty o'er and o'er has told
 The Boy, who is her best delight,
 Both what to follow, what to shun,
 What do, and what to leave undone,
 How turn to left, and how to right.

And Betty's most especial charge,
 Was, "Johnny ! Johnny ! mind that you
 Come home again, nor stop at all, —
 Come home again, whate'er befall,
 My Johnny, do, I pray you do."

To this did Johnny answer make,
 Both with his head and with his hand,
 And proudly shook the bridle too ;
 And then ! his words were not a few,
 Which Betty well could understand.

And now that Johnny is just going,
 Though Betty 's in a mighty flurry,
 She gently pats the Pony's side,
 On which her Idiot Boy must ride,
 And seems no longer in a hurry.

But when the Pony moved his legs,
O then for the poor Idiot Boy !
For joy he cannot hold the bridle,
For joy his head and heels are idle,
He 's idle all for very joy.

And while the Pony moves his legs,
In Johnny's left hand you may see
The green bough motionless and dead :
The moon that shines above his head
Is not more still and mute than he.

His heart it was so full of glee,
That till full fifty yards were gone
He quite forgot his holly whip,
And all his skill in horsemanship :
O happy, happy, happy John !

And while the Mother, at the door,
Stands fixed, her face with joy o'erflows ;
Proud of herself, and proud of him,
She sees him in his travelling trim,
How quietly her Johnny goes.

The silence of her Idiot Boy,
What hopes it sends to Betty's heart !
He 's at the guide-post, — he turns right ;
She watches till he 's out of sight,
And Betty will not then depart.

Burr, burr, — now Johnny's lips they burr,
 As loud as any mill, or near it;
 Meek as a lamb the Pony moves,
 And Johnny makes the noise he loves,
 And Betty listens, glad to hear it.

Away she hies to Susan Gale:
 Her Messenger's in merry tune;
 The owlets hoot, the owlets curr,
 And Johnny's lips they burr, burr, burr,
 As on he goes beneath the moon.

His steed and he right well agree;
 For of this Pony there's a rumor,
 That, should he lose his eyes and ears,
 And should he live a thousand years,
 He never will be out of humor.

But then he is a horse that thinks!
 And when he thinks, his pace is slack;
 Now, though he knows poor Johnny well,
 Yet, for his life, he cannot tell
 What he has got upon his back.

So through the moonlight lanes they go,
 And far into the moonlight dale,
 And by the church, and o'er the down,
 To bring a Doctor from the town,
 To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And Betty, now at Susan's side,
Is in the middle of her story,
What speedy help her Boy will bring,
With many a most diverting thing,
Of Johnny's wit, and Johnny's glory.

And Betty, still at Susan's side,
By this time is not quite so flurried ;
Demure with porringer and plate
She sits, as if in Susan's fate
Her life and soul were buried.

But Betty, poor good woman ! she,
You plainly in her face may read it,
Could lend out of that moment's store
Five years of happiness or more
To any that might need it.

But yet I guess that now and then
With Betty all was not so well ;
And to the road she turns her ears,
And thence full many a sound she hears,
Which she to Susan will not tell.

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans ;
" As sure as there 's a moon in heaven,"
Cries Betty, " he 'll be back again ;
They 'll both be here, — 't is almost ten, —
Both will be here before eleven."

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans ;
 The clock gives warning for eleven ;
 'T is on the stroke ; — “ He must be near,”
 Quoth Betty, “ and will soon be here,
 As sure as there 's a moon in heaven.”

The clock is on the stroke of twelve,
 And Johnny is not yet in sight :
 — The moon 's in heaven, as Betty sees,
 But Betty is not quite at ease ;
 And Susan has a dreadful night.

And Betty, half an hour ago,
 On Johnny vile reflections cast :
 “ A little idle sauntering Thing !”
 With other names, an endless string ;
 But now that time is gone and past.

And Betty 's drooping at the heart,
 That happy time all past and gone,
 “ How can it be he is so late ?
 The Doctor, he has made him wait ;
 Susan ! they 'll both be here anon.”

And Susan 's growing worse and worse,
 And Betty 's in a sad *quandary* ;
 And then there 's nobody to say
 If she must go, or she must stay !
 — She 's in a sad *quandary*.

The clock is on the stroke of one ;
But neither Doctor nor his Guide
Appears along the moonlight road ;
There 's neither horse nor man abroad,
And Betty 's still at Susan's side.

And Susan now begins to fear
Of sad mischances not a few,
That Johnny may perhaps be drowned ;
Or lost, perhaps, and never found ;
Which they must both for ever rue.

She prefaced half a hint of this
With " God forbid it should be true ! "
At the first word that Susan said,
Cried Betty, rising from the bed,
" Susan, I 'd gladly stay with you.

" I must be gone, I must away :
Consider, Johnny 's but half-wise ;
Susan, we must take care of him,
If he is hurt in life or limb — "
" O God forbid ! " poor Susan cries.

" What can I do ? " says Betty, going,
" What can I do to ease your pain ?
Good Susan tell me, and I 'll stay ;
I fear you 're in a dreadful way,
But I shall soon be back again."

“Nay, Betty, go ! good Betty, go !
 There ’s nothing that can ease my pain.”
 Then off she hies ; but with a prayer
 That God poor Susan’s life would spare,
 Till she comes back again.

So, through the moonlight lane she goes,
 And far into the moonlight dale ;
 And how she ran, and how she walked,
 And all that to herself she talked,
 Would surely be a tedious tale.

In high and low, above, below,
 In great and small, in round and square,
 In tree and tower, was Johnny seen,
 In bush and brake, in black and green ;
 ’T was Johnny, Johnny, everywhere.

And while she crossed the bridge, there came
 A thought with which her heart is sore, —
 Johnny perhaps his horse forsook,
 To hunt the moon within the brook,
 And never will be heard of more.

Now is she high upon the down,
 Alone amid a prospect wide ;
 There ’s neither Johnny nor his horse
 Among the fern or in the gorse ;
 There ’s neither Doctor nor his Guide.

“O saints! what is become of him?
Perhaps he’s climbed into an oak,
Where he will stay till he is dead;
Or, sadly he has been misled,
And joined the wandering gypsy-folk.

“Or him that wicked Pony’s carried
To the dark cave, the goblin’s hall;
Or in the castle he’s pursuing
Among the ghosts his own undoing;
Or playing with the waterfall.”

At poor old Susan then she railed,
While to the town she posts away:
“If Susan had not been so ill,
Alas! I should have had him still,
My Johnny, till my dying day.”

Poor Betty, in this sad distemper,
The Doctor’s self could hardly spare:
Unworthy things she talked, and wild;
Even he, of cattle the most mild,
The Pony, had his share.

But now she’s fairly in the town,
And to the Doctor’s door she lies;
’T is silence all on every side;
The town so long, the town so wide,
Is silent as the skies.

And now she's at the Doctor's door,
 She lifts the knocker, rap, rap, rap;
 The Doctor at the casement shows
 His glimmering eyes that peep and doze!
 And one hand rubs his old nightcap.

"O Doctor! Doctor! where's my Johnny?"
 "I'm here, what is't you want with me?"
 "O Sir! you know I'm Betty Foy,
 And I have lost my poor dear Boy,
 You know him, — him you often see;

"He's not so wise as some folks be —"
 "The devil take his wisdom!" said
 The Doctor, looking somewhat grim,
 "What, Woman! should I know of him?"
 And, grumbling, he went back to bed!

"O woe is me! O woe is me!
 Here will I die; here will I die;
 I thought to find my lost one here,
 But he is neither far nor near;
 O what a wretched mother I!"

She stops, she stands, she looks about;
 Which way to turn she cannot tell.
 Poor Betty, it would ease her pain
 If she had heart to knock again.
 —The clock strikes three,—a dismal knell!

Then up along the town she hies,
No wonder if her senses fail ;
This piteous news so much it shocked her,
She quite forgot to send the Doctor,
To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And now she's high upon the down,
And she can see a mile of road :
" O cruel ! I'm almost threescore ;
Such night as this was ne'er before,
There's not a single soul abroad."

She listens, but she cannot hear
The foot of horse, the voice of man ;
The streams with softest sound are flowing,
The grass you almost hear it growing,
You hear it now, if e'er you can.

The owlets through the long blue night
Are shouting to each other still :
Fond lovers ! yet not quite hob nob,
They lengthen out the tremulous sob,
That echoes far from hill to hill.

Poor Betty now has lost all hope,
Her thoughts are bent on deadly sin ;
A green-grown pond she just has past,
And from the brink she hurries fast,
Lest she should drown herself therein.

And now she sits her down and weeps ;
 Such tears she never shed before :
 " O dear, dear Pony ! my sweet joy !
 O carry back my Idiot Boy !
 And we will ne'er o'erload thee more."

A thought is come into her head :
 The Pony he is mild and good,
 And we have always used him well ;
 Perhaps he 's gone along the dell,
 And carried Johnny to the wood.

Then up she springs as if on wings ;
 She thinks no more of deadly sin ;
 If Betty fifty ponds should see,
 The last of all her thoughts would be
 To drown herself therein.

O Reader ! now that I might tell
 What Johnny and his Horse are doing !
 What they 've been doing all this time,
 O could I put it into rhyme,
 A most delightful tale pursuing !

Perhaps, and no unlikely thought !
 He with his Pony now doth roam
 The cliffs and peaks so high that are,
 To lay his hands upon a star,
 And in his pocket bring it home.

Perhaps he's turned himself about,
His face unto his horse's tail,
And, still and mute, in wonder lost,
All silent as a horseman-ghost,
He travels slowly down the vale.

And now, perhaps, is hunting sheep,
A fierce and dreadful hunter he ;
Yon valley, now so trim and green,
In five months' time, should he be seen,
A desert wilderness will be !

Perhaps, with head and heels on fire,
And like the very soul of evil,
He's galloping away, away,
And so will gallop on for aye,
The bane of all that dread the devil !

I to the Muses have been bound
These fourteen years, by strong indentures :
O gentle Muses ! let me tell
But half of what to him befell ;
He surely met with strange adventures.

O gentle Muses ! is this kind ?
Why will ye thus my suit repel ?
Why of your further aid bereave me ?
And can ye thus unfriended leave me,
Ye Muses ! whom I love so well ?

Who's yon, that, near the waterfall,
Which thunders down with headlong force,
Beneath the moon, yet shining fair,
As careless as if nothing were,
Sits upright on a feeding horse?

Unto his horse, — there feeding free,
He seems, I think, the rein to give;
Of moon or stars he takes no heed;
Of such we in romances read:
—'T is Johnny! Johnny! as I live.

And that's the very Pony, too!
Where is she, where is Betty Foy?
She hardly can sustain her fears;
The roaring waterfall she hears,
And cannot find her Idiot Boy.

Your Pony's worth his weight in gold:
Then calm your terrors, Betty Foy!
She's coming from among the trees,
And now all full in view she sees
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy.

And Betty sees the Pony too:
Why stand you thus, good Betty Foy?
It is no goblin, 't is no ghost,
'T is he whom you so long have lost,
He whom you love, your Idiot Boy.

She looks again — her arms are up —
She screams — she cannot move for joy ;
She darts, as with a torrent's force,
She almost has o'erturned the horse,
And fast she holds her Idiot Boy.

And Johnny burrs, and laughs aloud ;
Whether in cunning or in joy
I cannot tell ; but while he laughs,
Betty a drunken pleasure quaffs
To hear again her Idiot Boy.

And now she 's at the Pony's tail,
And now is at the Pony's head, —
On that side now, and now on this ;
And, almost stifled with her bliss,
A few sad tears does Betty shed.

She kisses o'er and o'er again
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy ;
She 's happy here, is happy there,
She is uneasy everywhere ;
Her limbs are all alive with joy.

She pats the Pony, where or when
She knows not, happy Betty Foy !
The little Pony glad may be,
But he is milder far than she,
You hardly can perceive his joy.

“O Johnny ! never mind the Doctor ;
 You’ve done your best, and that is all” :
 She took the reins, when this was said,
 And gently turned the Pony’s head
 From the loud waterfall.

By this the stars were almost gone,
 The moon was setting on the hill,
 So pale you scarcely looked at her :
 The little birds began to stir,
 Though yet their tongues were still.

The Pony, Betty, and her Boy,
 Wind slowly through the woody dale ;
 And who is she, betimes abroad,
 That hobbles up the steep, rough road ?
 Who is it, but old Susan Gale ?

Long time lay Susan lost in thought ;
 And many dreadful fears beset her,
 Both for her Messenger and Nurse ;
 And, as her mind grew worse and worse,
 Her body — it grew better.

She turned, she tossed herself in bed,
 On all sides doubts and terrors met her ;
 Point after point did she discuss ;
 And, while her mind was fighting thus,
 Her body still grew better.

“ Alas ! what is become of them ?
These fears can never be endured ;
I ’ll to the wood.” — The word scarce said,
Did Susan rise up from her bed,
As if by magic cured.

Away she goes, up hill and down,
And to the wood at length is come ;
She spies her friends, she shouts a greeting ;
O me ! it is a merry meeting
As ever was in Christendom.

The owls have hardly sung their last,
While our four travellers homeward wend ;
The owls have hooted all night long,
And with the owls began my song,
And with the owls must end.

For while they all were travelling home,
Cried Betty, “ Tell us, Johnny, do,
Where all this long night you have been,
What you have heard, what you have seen :
And, Johnny, mind you tell us true.”

Now Johnny all night long had heard
The owls in tuneful concert strive ;
No doubt too he the moon had seen ;
For in the moonlight he had been
From eight o’clock till five.

And thus to Betty's question he
 Made answer, like a traveller bold,
 (His very words I give to you,)
 "The cocks did crow to-who, to-who,
 And the moon did shine so cold!"
 — Thus answered Johnny in his glory,
 And that was all his travel's story.

1798.

 XXXII.

MICHAEL.

A PASTORAL POEM.

IF from the public way you turn your steps
 Up the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,
 You will suppose that with an upright path
 Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
 The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.
 But courage! for around that boisterous brook
 The mountains have all opened out themselves,
 And made a hidden valley of their own.
 No habitation can be seen; but they
 Who journey thither find themselves alone
 With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
 That overhead are sailing in the sky.
 It is in truth an utter solitude;
 Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
 But for one object which you might pass by,
 Might see and notice not. Beside the brook

Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones !
And to that simple object appertains
A story, — unenriched with strange events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of Shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved ; — not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel
For passions that were not my own, and think
(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts ;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful Poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

UPON the forest-side in Grassmere Vale
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name ;
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength : his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,

And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
 And watchful more than ordinary men.
 Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
 Of blasts of every tone ; and, oftentimes,
 When others heeded not, he heard the South
 Make subterraneous music, like the noise
 Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
 The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
 Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
 " The winds are now devising work for me !"
 And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives
 The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
 Up to the mountains : he had been alone
 Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
 That came to him, and left him, on the heights.
 So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
 And grossly that man errs, who would suppose
 That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
 Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.
 Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
 The common air ; hills, which with vigorous step
 He had so often climbed ; which had impressed
 So many incidents upon his mind
 Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear ;
 Which, like a book, preserved the memory
 Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
 Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
 The certainty of honorable gain ;
 Those fields, those hills — what could they less ?
 — had laid

Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in singleness.
His Helpmate was a comely matron, old,
Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house : two wheels she had
Of antique form ; this large, for spinning wool ;
That small, for flax ; and if one wheel had rest,
It was because the other was at work.
The Pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only Child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
To deem that he was old, — in shepherd's phrase,
With one foot in the grave. This only Son,
With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,
The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their household. I may truly say,
That they were as a proverb in the vale
For endless industry. When day was gone,
And from their occupations out of doors
The Son and Father were come home, even then
Their labor did not cease ; unless when all
Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,
Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,
Sat round the basket piled with oat-cakes,
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when
the meal

Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)
 And his old Father both betook themselves
 To such convenient work as might employ
 Their hands by the fire-side ; perhaps to card
 Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair
 Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
 Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge,
 That, in our ancient uncouth country style,
 With huge and black projection overbrowed
 Large space beneath, as duly as the light
 Of day grew dim, the Housewife hung a lamp ;
 An aged utensil, which had performed
 Service beyond all others of its kind.
 Early at evening did it burn, and late,
 Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
 Which, going by from year to year, had found,
 And left, the couple neither gay perhaps
 Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
 Living a life of eager industry.

And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth
 year,

There by the light of this old lamp they sat,
 Father and Son, while far into the night
 The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,
 Making the cottage through the silent hours
 Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
 This light was famous in its neighborhood,
 And was a public symbol of the life-

That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,
High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
And westward to the village near the lake ;
And from this constant light, so regular
And so far seen, the house itself, by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was named THE EVENING
STAR.

Thus living on through such a length of years,
The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
Have loved his Helpmate ; but to Michael's heart
This son of his old age was yet more dear, —
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all,
Than that a child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail.
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His heart and his heart's joy ! For oftentimes
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness ; and he had rocked
His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.

And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy
 Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love,
 Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
 To have the Young-one in his sight, when he
 Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool
 Sat with a fettered sheep before him stretched
 Under the large old oak, that near his door
 Stood single, and, from matchless depth of shade,
 Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
 Thence in our rustic dialect was called
 The CLIPPING TREE,* a name which yet it bears.
 There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
 With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
 Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
 Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
 Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep
 By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
 Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the Boy
 grew up
 A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
 Two steady roses that were five years old;
 Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
 With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
 With iron, making it throughout in all
 Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,

* Clipping is the word used in the North of England for shearing.

And gave it to the Boy ; wherewith equipt,
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock ;
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hinderance and a help ;
And for this cause not always, I believe,
Receiving from his Father hire of praise ;
Though naught was left undone which staff, or
voice, -
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts ; and to the heights,
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd loved before
Were dearer now ? that from the Boy there came
Feelings and emanations, — things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind ;
And that the old Man's heart seemed born again ?

Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew up :
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year,
He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time

Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound
 In surety for his brother's son, a man
 Of an industrious life, and ample means ;
 But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
 Had prest upon him ; and old Michael now
 Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
 A grievous penalty, but little less
 Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim,
 At the first hearing, for a moment took
 More hope out of his life than he supposed
 That any old man ever could have lost.
 As soon as he had armed himself with strength
 To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
 The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
 A portion of his patrimonial fields.
 Such was his first resolve ; he thought again,
 And his heart failed him. " Isabel," said he,
 Two evenings after he had heard the news,
 " I have been toiling more than seventy years,
 And in the open sunshine of God's love
 Have we all lived ; yet if these fields of ours
 Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
 That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
 Our lot is a hard lot ; the sun himself
 Has scarcely been more diligent than I ;
 And I have lived to be a fool at last
 To my own family. An evil man
 That was, and made an evil choice, if he
 Were false to us ; and if he were not false,
 There are ten thousand to whom loss like this

Had been no sorrow. I forgive him ; — but
'T were better to be dumb than to talk thus.

“ When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel ; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free ;
He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
Another kinsman, — he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade, — and Luke to him shall go,
And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
He may return to us. If here he stay,
What can be done ? Where every one is poor
What can be gained ? ”

At this the old Man pause
And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There 's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself ;
He was a parish-boy ; at the church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence,
And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbors bought
A basket, which they filled with peddler's wares ;
And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas ; where he grew wondrous rich,

And left estates and moneys to the poor,
 And at his birthplace built a chapel floored
 With marble, which he sent from foreign lands.
 These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
 Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
 And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,
 And thus resumed :— “ Well, Isabel ! this scheme,
 These two days, has been meat and drink to me.
 Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
 We have enough ; — I wish indeed that I
 Were younger ; — but this hope is a good hope.
 Make ready Luke’s best garments, of the best
 Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
 To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night :
 — If he *could* go, the boy should go to-night.”

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
 With a light heart. The Housewife for five days
 Was restless morn and night, and all day long
 Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
 Things needful for the journey of her son.
 But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
 To stop her in her work : for, when she lay
 By Michael’s side, she through the last two nights
 Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep :
 And when they rose at morning she could see
 That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
 She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
 Were sitting at the door, “ Thou must not go :
 We have no other Child but thee to-lose,

None to remember ; — do not go away,
For if thou leave thy Father he will die.”
The Youth made answer with a jocund voice ;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and altogether sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work ;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared
As cheerful as a grove in Spring : at length
The expected letter from their kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the Boy ;
To which requests were added, that forthwith
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over ; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbors round ;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
Had to her house returned, the old Man said,
“ He shall depart to-morrow.” To this word
The Housewife answered, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,
In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a Sheepfold ; and, before he heard

The tidings of his melancholy loss,
 For this same purpose he had gathered up
 A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
 Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
 With Luke that evening thitherward he walked :
 And as soon as he had reached the place he stopped,
 And thus the old Man spake to him : — “ My Son,
 To-morrow thou wilt leave me : with full heart
 I look upon thee, for thou art the same
 That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
 And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
 I will relate to thee some little part
 Of our two histories ; 't will do thee good
 When thou art from me, even if I should touch
 On things thou canst not know of. — After thou
 First cam'st into the world, — as oft befalls
 To new-born infants, — thou didst sleep away
 Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue
 Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
 And still I loved thee with increasing love.
 Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
 Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
 First uttering, without words, a natural tune ;
 While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
 Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed
 month,
 And in the open fields my life was passed,
 And on the mountains ; else I think that thou
 Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.
 But we were playmates, Luke : among these hills,

As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know.”
Luke had a manly heart ; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his hand,
And said, “ Nay, do not take it so ; — I see
That these are things of which I need not speak.
— Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good Father : and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others’ hands ; for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still
Remember them who loved me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together : here they lived,
As all their Forefathers had done ; and when
At length their time was come, they were not loth
To give their bodies to the family mould.
I wished that thou shouldst live the life they lived :
But ’t is a long time to look back, my Son,
And see so little gain from threescore years.
These fields were burdened when they came to me ;
Till I was forty years of age, not more
Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toiled and toiled ; God blessed me in my work,
And till these three weeks past the land was free.
— It looks as if it never could endure
Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou shouldst go.”

At this the old Man paused ;

Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,
 Thus, after a short silence, he resumed :
 "This was a work for us ; and now, my Son,
 It is a work for me. But lay one stone, —
 Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
 Nay, Boy, be of good hope ; — we both may live
 To see a better day. At eighty-four
 I still am strong and hale ; — do thou thy part ;
 I will do mine. — I will begin again
 With many tasks that were resigned to thee :
 Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
 Will I without thee go again, and do
 All works which I was wont to do alone,
 Before I knew thy face. — Heaven bless thee, Boy !
 Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
 With many hopes ; it should be so ; yes — yes —
 I knew that thou couldst never have a wish
 To leave me, Luke : thou hast been bound to me
 Only by links of love : when thou art gone,
 What will be left to us ! — But I forget
 My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
 As I requested ; and hereafter, Luke,
 When thou art gone away, should evil men
 Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
 And of this moment ; hither turn thy thoughts,
 And God will strengthen thee : amid all fear
 And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
 Mayst bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived,
 Who, being innocent, did for that cause
 Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well ;

When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here : a covenant
'T will be between us ; but, whatever fate
Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave."

. The Shepherd ended here ; and Luke stooped
down,
And, as his Father had requested, laid
The first stone of the Sheepfold. At the sight
The old Man's grief broke from him ; to his heart
He pressed his Son, he kissèd him and wept ;
And to the house together they returned.
— Hushed was that house in peace, or seeming
peace,
Ere the night fell : — with morrow's dawn the Boy
Began his journey, and when he had reached
The public way, he put on a bold face ;
And all the neighbors, as he passed their doors,
Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
That followed him till he was out of sight.

A good report did from their Kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well-doing : and the Boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were through-
out

" The prettiest letters that were ever seen."
Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months passed on : and once again

The Shepherd went about his daily work
 With confident and cheerful thoughts ; and now
 Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
 He to that valley took his way, and there
 Wrought at the Sheepfold. Meantime Luke began
 To slacken in his duty ; and, at length,
 He in the dissolute city gave himself
 To evil courses : ignominy and shame
 Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
 To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love ;
 'T will make a thing endurable, which else
 Would overset the brain, or break the heart :
 I have conversed with more than one who well
 Remember the old Man, and what he was
 Years after he had heard this heavy news.
 His bodily frame had been from youth to age
 Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
 He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
 And listened to the wind ; and, as before,
 Performed all kinds of labor for his sheep,
 And for the land, his small inheritance.
 And to that hollow dell from time to time
 Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
 His flock had need. 'T is not forgotten yet
 The pity which was then in every heart
 For the old Man, — and 't is believed by all,
 That many and many a day he thither went,
 And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the Sheepfold, sometimes was he seen
 Sitting alone, or with his faithful dog,
 Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
 The length of full seven years, from time to time,
 He at the building of the Sheepfold wrought,
 And left the work unfinished when he died.
 Three years, or little more, did Isabel
 Survive her husband : at her death the estate
 Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.
 The Cottage which was named the EVENING STAR
 Is gone, — the ploughshare has been through the
 ground
 On which it stood ; great changes have been wrought
 In all the neighborhood : — yet the oak is left
 That grew beside their door ; and the remains
 Of the unfinished Sheepfold may be seen
 Beside the boisterous brook of Green-head Ghyll.
1800.

XXXIII.

THE WIDOW ON WINDERMERE SIDE.

I.

How beautiful when up a lofty height
 Honor ascends among the humblest poor,
 And feeling sinks as deep ! See there the door
 Of one, a Widow, left beneath a weight
 Of blameless debt. On evil Fortune's spite

She wasted no complaint, but strove to make
 A just repayment, both for conscience' sake
 And that herself and hers should stand upright
 In the world's eye. Her work when daylight failed
 Paused not, and through the depth of night she kept
 Such earnest vigils, that belief prevailed
 With some, the noble creature never slept ;
 But, one by one, the hand of death assailed
 Her children from her inmost heart bewept.

II.

The Mother mourned, nor ceased her tears to flow
 Till a winter's noonday placed her buried Son
 Before her eyes, last child of many gone, —
 His raiment of angelic white, and lo !
 His very feet bright as the dazzling snow
 Which they are touching ; yea, far brighter, even
 As that which comes, or seems to come, from heaven,
 Surpasses aught these elements can show.
 Much she rejoiced, trusting that from that hour,
 Whate'er befell, she could not grieve or pine ;
 But the Transfigured, in and out of season,
 Appeared, and spiritual presence gained a power
 Over material forms that mastered reason.
 O gracious Heaven, in pity make her thine !

III.

But why that prayer ? as if to her could come
 No good but by the way that leads to bliss
 Thro' Death, — so judging we should judge amiss.

Since reason failed, want is her threatened doom,
Yet frequent transports mitigate the gloom :
Nor of those maniacs is she one that kiss
The air or laugh upon a precipice ;
No, passing through strange sufferings toward the
tomb,
She smiles as if a martyr's crown were won :
Oft, when light breaks through clouds or waving
trees,
With outspread arms, and fallen upon her knees,
The Mother hails in her descending Son
An Angel, and in earthly ecstasies
Her own angelic glory seems begun.

XXXIV.

THE ARMENIAN LADY'S LOVE.

[The subject of the following poem is from the *Orlandus* of the author's friend, Kenelm Henry Digby: and the liberty is taken of inscribing it to him as an acknowledgment, however unworthy, of pleasure and instruction derived from his numerous and valuable writings, illustrative of the piety and chivalry of the olden time.]

I.

YOU have heard " a Spanish Lady
How she wooed an Englishman " ; *

* See, in Percy's *Reliques*, that fine old ballad, " The Spanish Lady's Love " ; from which poem the form of stanza, as suitable to dialogue, is adopted.

Hear now of a fair Armenian,
 Daughter of the proud Soldàn ;
 How she loved a Christian Slave, and told her pain
 By word, look, deed, with hope that he might love
 again.

II.

“ Pluck that rose, it moves my liking,”
 Said she, lifting up her veil ;
 “ Pluck it for me, gentle gardener,
 Ere it wither and grow pale.”
 “ Princess fair, I till the ground, but may not take
 From twig or bed an humble flower, even for
 your sake ! ”

III.

“ Grieved am I, submissive Christian !
 To behold thy captive state ;
 Women in your land may pity
 (May they not?) the unfortunate.”
 “ Yes, kind Lady ! otherwise man could not bear
 Life, which to every one that breathes is full of care.”

IV.

“ Worse than idle is compassion
 If it end in tears and sighs ;
 Thee from bondage would I rescue,
 And from vile indignities ;
 Nurtured, as thy mien bespeaks, in high degree,
 Look up, and help a hand that longs to set thee
 free.”

V.

“Lady ! dread, the wish, nor venture
In such peril to engage ;
Think how it would stir against you
Your most loving father's rage :
Sad deliverance would it be, and yoked with shame,
Should troubles overflow on her from whom it
came.”

VI.

“Generous Frank ! the just in effort
Are of inward peace secure :
- Hardships for the brave encountered,
Even the feeblest may endure :
If almighty grace through me thy chains unbind
My father for slave's work may seek a slave in
mind.”

VII.

“Princess, at this burst of goodness,
My long-frozen heart grows warm !”
“Yet you make all courage fruitless,
Me to save from chance of harm :
Leading such companion, I that gilded dome,
Yon minarets, would gladly leave for his worst
home.”

VIII.

“Feeling tunes your voice, fair Princess !
And your brow is free from scorn,

Else these words would come like mockery,
 Sharper than the pointed thorn."

"Whence the undeserved mistrust? Too wide apart
 Our faith hath been, — O would that eyes could
 see the heart!"

IX.

"Tempt me not, I pray; my doom is
 These base implements to wield;
 Rusty lance, I ne'er shall grasp thee,
 Ne'er assoil my cobwebb'd shield!
 Never see my native land, nor castle towers,
 Nor her who thinking of me there counts widowed
 hours."

X.

"Prisoner! pardon youthful fancies;
 Wedded? If you *can*, say no!
 Blessed is and be your consort;
 Hopes I cherished, — let them go!
 Handmaid's privilege would leave my purpose free,
 Without another link to my felicity."

XI.

"Wedded love with loyal Christians,
 Lady, is a mystery rare;
 Body, heart, and soul in union,
 Make one being of a pair."
 "Humble love in me would look for no return,
 Soft as a guiding star that cheers, but cannot burn."

XII.

“ Gracious Allah ! by such title
Do I dare to thank the God,
Him who thus exalts thy spirit,
Flower of an unchristian sod !
Or hast thou put off wings which thou in heaven
dost wear ?
What have I seen, and heard, or dreamt ? where
am I ? where ? ”

XIII.

Here broke off the dangerous converse :
Less impassioned words might tell
How the pair escaped together,
Tears not wanting, nor a knell
Of sorrow in her heart, while thro' her father's door,
And from her narrow world, she passed for ever-
more.

XIV.

But affections higher, holier,
Urged her steps ; she shrunk from trust
In a sensual creed, that trampled
Woman's birthright into dust.
Little be the wonder then, the blame be none,
If she, a timid Maid, hath put such boldness on.

XV.

Judge both Fugitives with knowledge :
In those old romantic days

Mighty were the soul's commandments
 To support, restrain, or raise.
 Foes might hang upon their path, snakes rustle
 near,
 But nothing from their inward selves had they to
 fear.

XVI.

Thought infirm ne'er came between them,
 Whether printing desert sands
 With accordant steps, or gathering
 Forest-fruit with social hands ;
 Or whispering like two reeds that in the cold moon-
 beam
 Bend with the breeze their heads, beside a crystal
 stream.

XVII.

On a friendly deck reposing,
 They at length for Venice steer ;
 There, when they had closed their voyage,
 One, who daily on the pier
 Watched for tidings from the East beheld his
 lord,
 Fell down and clasped his knees for joy, not
 uttering word.

XVIII.

Mutual was the sudden transport ;
 Breathless questions followed fast,

Years contracting to a moment,
Each word greedier than the last ;
“ Hie thee to the Countess, friend ! return with
speed,
And of this Stranger speak, by whom her lord
was freed.

XIX.

“ Say that I, who might have languished,
Drooped, and pined till life was spent,
Now before the gates of Stolberg
My Deliverer would present
For a crowning recompense, the precious grace
Of her who in my heart still holds her ancient
place.

XX.

“ Make it known that my Companion
Is of royal Eastern blood,
Thirsting after all perfection,
Innocent, and meek, and good,
Though with misbelievers bred ; but that dark night
Will holy Church disperse by beams of Gospel
light.”

XXI.

Swiftly went that gray-haired Servant,
Soon returned a trusty Page
Charged with greetings, benedictions,
Thanks, and praises, each a gage

For a sunny thought to cheer the Stranger's way,
Her virtuous scruples to remove, her fears allay.

xxii.

And how blest the Reunited,
While beneath their castle-walls
Runs a deafening noise of welcome ! —
Blest, though every tear that falls
Doth in its silence of past sorrow tell,
And makes a meeting seem most like a dear farewell.

xxiii.

Through a haze of human nature,
Glorified by heavenly light,
Looked the beautiful Deliverer
On that overpowering sight,
While across her virgin cheek pure blushes strayed,
For every tender sacrifice her heart had made.

xxiv.

On the ground the weeping Countess
Knelt, and kissed the Stranger's hand ;
Act of soul-devoted homage,
Pledge of an eternal band :
Nor did aught of future days that kiss belie,
Which, with a generous shout, the crowd did ratify.

xxv.

Constant to the fair Armenian,
Gentle pleasures round her moved,

Like a tutelary spirit
 Reverenced, like a sister loved.
 Christian meekness smoothed for all the path of life,
 Who, loving most, should wiseliest love, their only
 strife.

XXVI.

Mute memento of that union
 In a Saxon church survives,
 Where a cross-legged Knight lies sculptured
 As between two wedded Wives, —
 Figures with armorial signs of race and birth,
 And the vain rank the pilgrims bore while yet on
 earth.

1830.

XXXV.

LOVING AND LIKING:

IRREGULAR VERSES, ADDRESSED TO A
CHILD.

(BY MY SISTER.)

THERE 's more in words than I can teach :
 Yet listen, Child ! — I would not preach ;
 But only give some plain directions
 To guide your speech and your affections.
 Say not you *love* a roasted fowl,
 But you may love a screaming owl,

And, if you can, the unwieldy toad
 That crawls from his secure abode
 Within the mossy garden wall
 When evening dews begin to fall.
 O mark the beauty of his eye !
 What wonders in that circle lie !
 So clear, so bright, our fathers said
 He wears a jewel in his head !
 And when, upon some showery day,
 Into a path or public way
 A frog leaps out from bordering grass,
 Startling the timid as they pass,
 Do you observe him, and endeavor
 To take the intruder into favor ;
 Learning from him to find a reason
 For a light heart in a dull season.
 And you may love him in the pool,
 That is for him a happy school,
 In which he swims as taught by nature,
 Fit pattern for a human creature,
 Glancing amid the water bright,
 And sending upward sparkling light.

Nor blush if o'er your heart be stealing
 A love for things that have no feeling :
 The Spring's first rose by you espied,
 May fill your breast with joyful pride ;
 And you may love the strawberry-flower,
 And love the strawberry in its bower ;
 But when the fruit, so often praised

For beauty, to your lip is raised,
Say not you *love* the delicate treat,
But *like* it, enjoy it, and thankfully eat.

Long may you love your pensioner mouse,
Though one of a tribe that torment the house :
Nor dislike for her cruel sport the cat,
Deadly foe both of mouse and rat ;
Remember she follows the law of her kind,
And Instinct is neither wayward nor blind.
Then think of her beautiful gliding form,
Her tread that would scarcely crush a worm,
And her soothing song by the winter fire,
Soft as the dying throb of the lyre.

I would not circumscribe your love :
It may soar with the eagle and brood with the dove,
May pierce the earth with the patient mole,
Or track the hedgehog to his hole.
Loving and liking are the solace of life,
Rock the cradle of joy, smooth the death-bed of
strife.

You love your father and your mother,
Your grown-up and your baby brother ;
You love your sister, and your friends,
And countless blessings which God sends :
And while these right affections play,
You *live* each moment of your day ;
They lead you on to full content,
And likings fresh and innocent,

That store the mind, the memory feed,
 And prompt to many a gentle deed :
 But *likings* come, and pass away ;
 'T is *love* that remains till our latest day :
 Our heavenward guide is holy love,
 And will be our bliss with saints above

1832.

 XXXVI.

FAREWELL LINES.

“ HIGH bliss is only for a higher state,”
 But, surely, if severe afflictions borne
 With patience merit the reward of peace,
 Peace ye deserve ; and may the solid good,
 Sought by a wise though late exchange, and here
 With bounteous hand beneath a cottage-roof
 To you accorded, never be withdrawn,
 Nor for the world's best promises renounced.
 Most soothing was it for a welcome Friend,
 Fresh from the crowded city, to behold
 That lonely union, privacy so deep,
 Such calm employments, such entire content.
 So when the rain is over, the storm laid,
 A pair of herons oft-times have I seen,
 Upon a rocky islet, side by side,
 Drying their feathers in the sun, at ease ;
 And so, when night with grateful gloom had fallen,

Two glowworms in such nearness that they shared,
As seemed, their soft self-satisfying light,
Each with the other, on the dewy ground,
Where He that made them blesses their repose.—
When wandering among lakes and hills I note,
Once more, those creatures thus by Nature paired,
And guarded in their tranquil state of life,
Even, as your happy presence to my mind
Their union brought, they will repay the debt,
And send a thankful spirit back to you,
With hope that we, dear Friends! shall meet again.

XXXVII.

THE REDBREAST.

(SUGGESTED IN A WESTMORELAND COTTAGE.)

DRIVEN in by Autumn's sharpening air
From half-stripped woods and pastures bare,
Brisk Robin seeks a kindlier home :
Not like a beggar does he come,
But enters as a looked-for guest,
Confiding in his ruddy breast,
As if it were a natural shield
Charged with a blazon on the field,
Due to that good and pious deed
Of which we in the Ballad read.

But pensive fancies putting by,
 And wild-wood sorrows, speedily
 He plays the expert ventriloquist ;
 And, caught by glimpses now, now missed,
 Puzzles the listener with a doubt
 If the soft voice he throws about
 Comes from within doors or without !
 Was ever such a sweet confusion
 Sustained by delicate illusion ?
 He 's at your elbow, — to your feeling
 The notes are from the floor or ceiling ;
 And there 's a riddle to be guessed,
 Till you have marked his heaving chest,
 And busy throat, whose sink and swell
 Betray the Elf that loves to dwell
 In Robin's bosom, as a chosen cell.

Heart-pleased we smile upon the Bird
 If seen, and with like pleasure stirred
 Commend him, when he 's only heard.
 But small and fugitive our gain
 Compared with *hers* who long hath lain,
 With languid limbs and patient head,
 Reposing on a lone sick-bed ;
 Where now she daily hears a strain
 That cheats her of too busy cares,
 Eases her pain, and helps her prayers.
 And who but this dear Bird beguiled
 The fever of that pale-faced Child ;
 Now cooling, with his passing-wing,

Her forehead, like a breeze of Spring:
Recalling now, with descant soft
Shed round her pillow from aloft,
Sweet thoughts of angels hovering nigh,
And the invisible sympathy
Of "Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John,
Blessing the bed she lies upon" ? *
And sometimes, just as listening ends
In slumber, with the cadence blends
A dream of that low-warbled hymn
Which old folk, fondly pleased to trim
Lamps of faith, now burning dim,
Say that the Cherubs carved in stone,
When clouds gave way at dead of night
And the ancient church was filled with light,
Used to sing in heavenly tone,
Above and round the sacred places
They guard, with winged baby-faces.

Thrice happy Creature ! in all lands
Nurtured by hospitable hands :
Free entrance to this cot has he,
Entrance and exit both *yet* free ;
And when the keen, unruffled weather,

* The words, —

"Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John,
Bless the bed that I lie on," —

are part of a child's prayer, still in general use through the
Northern counties.

That thus brings man and bird together,
 Shall with its pleasantness be past,
 And casement closed and door made fast,
 To keep at bay the howling blast,
He needs not fear the season's rage,
 For the whole house is Robin's cage.
 Whether the bird flit here or there,
 O'er table *lilt*, or perch on chair,
 Though some may frown and make a stir,
 To scare him as a trespasser,
 And he belike will flinch or start,
 Good friends he has to take his part ;
 One chiefly, who with voice and look
 Pleads for him from the chimney-nook,
 Where sits the Dame, and wears away
 Her long and vacant holiday ;
 With images about her heart,
 Reflected from the years gone by,
 On human nature's second infancy.

XXXVIII.

HER EYES ARE WILD.

I.

HER eyes are wild, her head is bare,
The sun has burnt her coal-black hair;
Her eyebrows have a rusty stain,
And she came far from over the main.
She had a baby on her arm,
Or else she were alone :
And underneath the hay-stack warm,
And on the greenwood stone,
She talked and sung the woods among,
And it was in the English tongue.

II.

" Sweet babe ! they say that I am mad ;
But nay, my heart is far too glad ;
And I am happy when I sing
Full many a sad and doleful thing :
Then, lovely baby, do not fear !
I pray thee have no fear of me ;
But safe as in a cradle, here,
My lovely baby ! thou shalt be :
To thee I know too much I owe ;
I cannot work thee any woe.

III.

"A fire was once within my brain ;
 And in my head a dull, dull pain ;
 And fiendish faces, one, two, three,
 Hung at my breast, and pulled at me.
 But then there came a sight of joy ;
 It came at once to do me good :
 I waked, and saw my little boy,
 My little boy of flesh and blood ;
 O joy for me that sight to see !
 For he was here, and only he.

IV.

"Suck, little babe, O suck again !
 It cools my blood ; it cools my brain ;
 Thy lips I feel them, baby ! they
 Draw from my heart the pain away.
 O press me with thy little hand !
 It loosens something at my chest ;
 About that tight and deadly band ,
 I feel thy little fingers prest.
 The breeze I see is in the tree :
 It comes to cool my babe and me.

V.

"O love me, love me, little boy !
 Thou art thy mother's only joy ;
 And do not dread the waves below,
 When o'er the sea-rock's edge we go ;
 The high crag cannot work me harm,

Nor leaping torrents when they howl ;
The babe I carry on my arm,
He saves for me my precious soul ;
Then happy lie ; for blest am I ;
Without me my sweet babe would die.

VI.

“Then do not fear, my boy ! for thee
Bold as a lion will I be ;
And I will always be thy guide,
Through hollow snows and rivers wide.
I ’ll build an Indian bower ; I know
The leaves that make the softest bed :
And, if from me thou wilt not go,
But still be true till I am dead,
My pretty thing ! then thou shalt sing
As merry as the birds in spring.

VII.

“Thy father cares not for my breast,
’T is thine, sweet baby, there to rest ;
’T is all thine own ! — and if its hue
Be changed, that was so fair to view,
’T is fair enough for thee, my dove !
My beauty, little child, is flown,
But thou wilt live with me in love ;
And what if my poor cheek be brown ?
’T is well for me thou canst not see
How pale and wan it else would be.

VIII.

"Dread not their taunts, my little Life;
 I am thy father's wedded wife;
 And underneath the spreading tree
 We two will live in honesty.
 If his sweet boy he could forsake,
 With me he never would have stayed:
 From him no harm my babe can take;
 But he, poor man, is wretched made;
 And every day we two will pray
 For him that's gone and far away.

IX.

"I'll teach my boy the sweetest things:
 I'll teach him how the owlet sings.
 My little babe! thy lips are still,
 And thou hast almost sucked thy fill.
 — Where art thou gone, my own dear child?
 What wicked looks are those I see?
 Alas! alas! that look so wild,
 It never, never came from me:
 If thou art mad, my pretty lad,
 Then I must be for ever sad.

X.

"O smile on me, my little lamb!
 For I thy own dear mother am:
 My love for thee has well been tried:
 I've sought thy father far and wide.

I know the poisons of the shade ;
I know the earth-nuts fit for food :
Then, pretty dear, be not afraid :
We 'll find thy father in the wood.
Now laugh and be gay, to the woods away !
And there, my babe, we 'll live for aye."

1798.

NOTES.

Page 56.

"And, hovering, round it often did a raven fly."

From a short MS. poem read to me when an undergraduate, by my schoolfellow and friend, Charles Farish, long since deceased. The verses were by a brother of his, a man of promising genius, who died young.

Page 80.

"The Borderers."

This Dramatic Piece, as noticed in its title-page, was composed in 1795-6. It lay nearly from that time till within the last two or three months unregarded among my papers, without being mentioned even to my most intimate friends. Having, however, impressions upon my mind which made me unwilling to destroy the MS., I determined to undertake the responsibility of publishing it during my own life, rather than impose upon my successors the task of deciding its fate. Accordingly, it has been revised with some care; but as it was at first written, and is now published, without any view to its exhibition upon the stage, not the slightest alteration has been made in the conduct of the story, or the composition of the characters; above all, in respect to the two leading Persons of the Drama, I felt no inducement to make any change. The study of human nature suggests this awful truth, that, as in the

1 trials to which life subjects us, sin and crime are apt to start from their very opposite qualities, so are there no limits to the hardening of the heart and the perversion of the understanding to which they may carry their slaves. During my long residence in France, while the Revolution was rapidly advancing to its extreme of wickedness, I had frequent opportunities of being an eyewitness of this process, and it was while that knowledge was fresh upon my memory, that the Tragedy of "The Borderers" was composed.

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"The Norman Boy."

"Among ancient trees there are few, I believe, at least in France, so worthy of attention as an Oak which may be seen in the 'Pays de Caux,' about a league from Yvetot, close to the church, and in the burial-ground of Allonville.

"The height of this tree does not answer to its girth; the trunk, from the roots to the summit, forms a complete cone; and the inside of this cone is hollow throughout the whole of its height.

"Such is the Oak of Allonville, in its state of nature. The hand of man, however, has endeavored to impress upon it a character still more interesting, by adding a religious feeling to the respect which its age naturally inspires.

"The lower part of its hollow trunk has been transformed into a Chapel of six or seven feet in diameter, carefully wainscotted and paved, and an open iron gate guards the humble sanctuary.

"Leading to it there is a staircase, which twists round the body of the tree. At certain seasons of the year divine service is performed in this Chapel.

"The summit has been broken off many years, but there is a surface at the top of the trunk, of the diameter of a very large tree, and from it rises a pointed roof, covered with slates, in the form of a steeple, which is surmounted with an iron

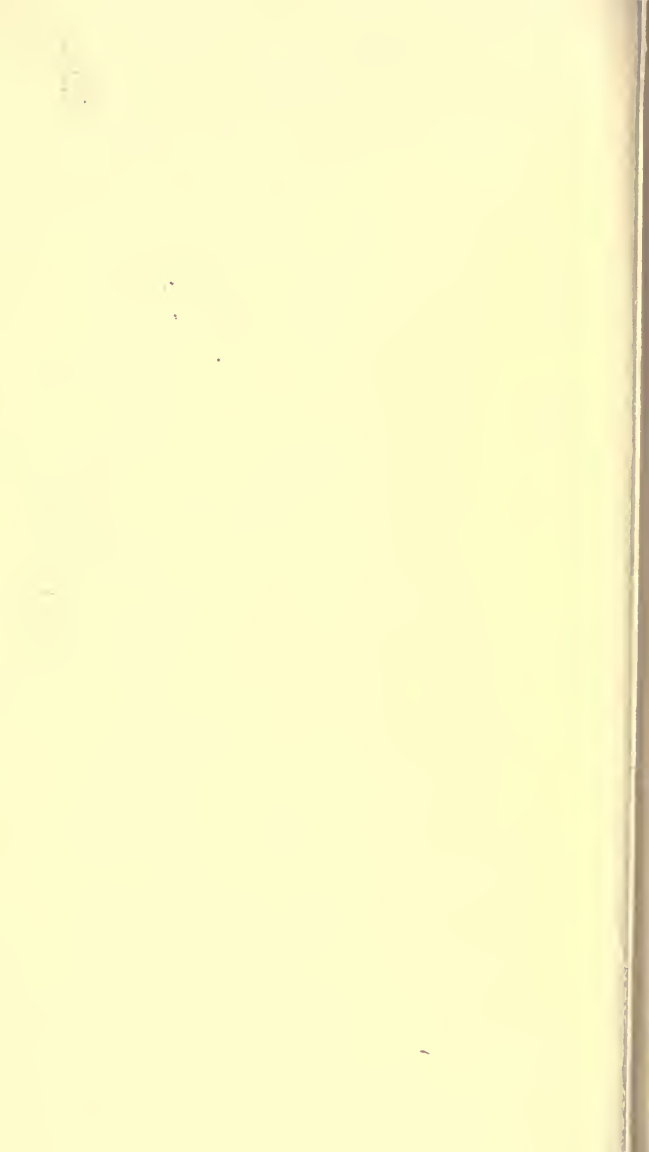
Cross, that rises in a picturesque manner from the middle of the leaves, like an ancient Hermitage above the surrounding Wood.

“ Over the entrance to the Chapel an Inscription appears, which informs us it was erected by the Abbé du Détroit, Curate of Allonville in the year 1696; and over a door is another, dedicating it ‘ To Our Lady of Peace.’ ”

Vide No. 14, Saturday Magazine.

END OF VOL. I.





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Worksworth, William
Poetical works

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